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MEMOIRS
OF THE
LIFE OF AGRIPPINA,
THE
WIFE OF GERMANICUS.

Cruttwell, Printer, St. James's-Street, Bath.

MEMOIRS
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LIFE OF AGRIPPINA,
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WIFE OF GERMANICUS.

BY
ELIZABETH HAMILTON,
AUTHOR OF "LETTERS ON THE ELEMENTARY
PRINCIPLES OF EDUCATION;" &c. &c.

"History may be said to embody Truth, and prove from Facts
"the Reasonableness of Opinion." JOHNSON.

IN THREE VOLS.—VOL. III.

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CHAPTER I.

Affairs at Rome.—AGRIPPINA mortified by the Recall of D. SILANUS.—NERO presented to the Senate.—His Marriage with JULIA the Daughter of DRUSUS.—SEJANUS procures the Promise of an Alliance with the imperial Family; his Disappointment.—Proceedings in the Senate.—DRUSUS strikes SEJANUS.—AGRIPPINA'S imprudent Exultation.—SEJANUS determined on Revenge.

A. D. 20, 21.

THE disgrace of Lepida produced a sensation of deep regret in the ancient families of Rome, who saw with concern, that, by a multiplicity of sinister events, the strength and glory of every illustrious house had been diminished. The

people, besides the affectionate interest which they individually took in the concerns of their particular patrons, retained so much veneration towards the descendants of the patriot heroes who had been the founders of their country's greatness, that the misfortunes of an ancient house were still regarded as a species of public calamity. Nor was it till the nobles had on their part taken infinite pains, by their follies and their vices, to extinguish these long-cherished sentiments of attachment and respect, that they ceased to be felt by the populace. So forcibly did they at present operate, that the misfortunes of the Calpurnian and Æmilian families,* who had each in the last year been dishonoured by the public disgrace of a distinguished member, were spoken of as ominous to Rome. The fate of Piso was indeed unpitied; but it was remarked with indignation, that it was

* Piso was of the Calpurnian, and Lepida of the Æmilian family.

not for crimes against the state, but for offences against individuals, that the greater number had been condemned to suffer. It was not for violating the laws of morality, but for wounding the pride of Augustus in the seduction of his daughter, that the only remaining son of Antony had been led to the scaffold. At the present moment, Decius Silanus was wandering in distant exile for a similar offence. If such punishments were to be inflicted merely to gratify the malice or caprice of those in power, there would soon be an end of the patrician race.

Of the once numerous family of Agrippa, two only now remained ; and of these one had been for many years lost to society ! Why should she not be permitted to return ? Had not her punishment been already more than proportionate to her crimes ?

Such were the murmurs of the people : murmurs in which those of superior rank were well inclined to join. Agrippina
listened

listened with peculiar interest to those sentiments of compassion which had been inspired by the situation of her unhappy sister, concerning whose restoration she never before had dared to entertain a ray of hope. She knew that Tiberius was no stranger to the general voice, and began to think it possible, that in order to wipe out the odium which had been incurred by the prosecution of Lepida, he might so far relent as to permit of Julia's return to Rome.

Tiberius was indeed perfectly well acquainted with all that passed, and determined to shew, by one gracious deed, that he was not altogether incapable of clemency. But alas! it was not to Julia that his clemency was likely to extend! His hatred of the mother had not been so far extinguished by her death, as to incline him to shew mercy to her ill-fated child. The man who had been the cause of her disgrace, was, in his opinion, a fitter object
of

of his kindness. By restoring Decius Silanus, he should not only gratify the Julian family in all its numerous branches, and confer an obligation on Marcus Silanus, who was brother to Decius, and a distinguished speaker in the senate; but would wound the feelings of Agrippina, who could not but be sensibly mortified at seeing the seducer of her sister restored to his family, while the weaker partner of his guilt was doomed to suffer the rigours of hopeless banishment. It was this last consideration which probably reconciled the mind of Tiberius to the performance of an act of generosity. Silanus was recalled, and Agrippina felt, from this glaring proof of the emperor's partiality, all the pain and indignation which his utmost malice could have wished.

The character of Julia had never been such as to render her extremely interesting, even to her friends. Her vicious inclinations had, even in early life, been unrestrained

strained by any sense of shame or feeling of propriety. Had she, therefore, been subjected merely to suffer the mortification of retirement, all would have acquiesced in the justice of the decree which prevented her return to society. But by the rigour of punishment, the ends of justice were defeated. Compassion for the sufferer made people willing to palliate or overlook her crimes. The friends and flatterers of Agrippina, when they spoke of her sister, recalled to her remembrance the graces of her person, the sprightly gaiety of her disposition, and all the charms she possessed in the days of infant innocence. Her sufferings were considered as the cruel decree of inevitable destiny, and lamented with such pathos as left no room to imagine that they were result of her own misconduct.

The children of Agrippina, in learning to pity the misfortunes of their aunt, inevitably received impressions that were far
from

from being favourable to virtue. The feeling of horror which ought to have been excited by the idea of guilt, was transferred to the punisher of the guilty, and was thus mingled with resentment and revenge. Young as the daughters of Germanicus now were, associations so pernicious might be productive of the most fatal consequences; and as the elder in particular evidently possessed that quickness of parts, which so often proves the most dangerous gift which nature can bestow, her mind ought to have been guarded from error with more than common vigilance.

Reflections like these did not probably occur to Agrippina, whose views of happiness for her children were bounded within the narrow limits of the present life. In cultivating their understanding, and giving them all the graces and accomplishments which could adorn their exalted station, she performed her utmost duty. She contemplated with pride the future consequences

quences of the attention she bestowed on their improvement. But of all her children, it was her eldest son on whom she placed her fondest hopes.

In the beauty of his countenance, the symmetry and gracefulness of his person, and in the still more endearing qualities of his mind, he bore so striking a resemblance to his father, that the widowed mother might be pardoned for regarding him with peculiar tenderness. The first action by which Tiberius had ever produced one pleasing emotion in her heart, was his introduction of this interesting youth to the senate. The ceremony was performed in a manner that gave universal satisfaction. Tiberius, in presenting the young Nero to the fathers, recommended him to their favour and protection, and concluded his speech by requesting that they would honour the son of Germanicus by their permission to stand candidate for the office of questor, to which he was not by law entitled

to aspire till the twenty-fourth year of his age. The permission was granted by acclamation: nor did the senate stop at this first favour; they at the same time voted a seat in the pontifical college, an honour which conferred upon the young prince many important privileges.*

The son of Germanicus found no less favour from the people. He was received in the Forum with the loudest expressions of regard; nor did the emperor, if then jealous of the attachment shewn to Nero, at that time betray his resentment. He on the contrary appeared so pleased as to grant a largess to the people, which was remarkable, as one of the few acts of bounty that they experienced in his reign.

Agrippina rejoiced in the opening prospects of her darling son, and endeavoured to find in the hopes which they inspired a solace for all her former sorrows. His marriage with the daughter of Drusus was

* Note A.

the

the event that next engaged her maternal solicitude. She saw in it the strengthening of his interest, and the security of his future peace. From Julia's extreme youth she had reason to expect docility; and the filial piety of Nero would, she was assured, suffer no diminution from any change of circumstances.

The nuptials of the young pair were celebrated with great splendour, and were marked by an event, which, as it added to the honours of their family, was deemed a happy omen of their future fortunes. On the first of January,* Tiberius and his son Drusus entered on their joint consulship. This double occasion of rejoicing added so much to the usual festivity of the season, that in feasting, mirth, and gaiety, every former sorrow, and every present care, was for a time forgotten. Agrippina's pride was gratified by the congratulatory compliments of all the world; but while she

* Year of Rome, 724. A.D. 21. contem,

contemplated with exultation the happy prospects of her family, the untoward disposition of her second son checked her sanguine hopes.

The overbearing temper of this young man had been strengthened by his grandmother's indulgence, till it was past contrul. Agrippina in vain endeavoured to rectify the faults of his education by a stricter discipline. It was now too late. The restraint, which would in childhood have curbed the rising passions, now only tended to produce indignation and resentment. To her partiality for his elder brother, Drusus unfortunately attributed all that he was at any time made to suffer for his own improper conduct; and as the mild temper of Nero never exposed him to similar disgrace, his virtues became the object of jealousy, which was soon converted into aversion.

Agrippina grieved to see, that on the present occasion, Drusus, far from rejoicing
in

in his brother's happiness, so evidently envied, him as to be glad when an opportunity offered of saying any thing mortifying or disagreeable. Of this nature was a report then put in circulation of an intended marriage between the son of their uncle Claudius and a daughter of Sejanus, the favourite minister. Agrippina indignantly rejected the idea of such a connexion, and spoke of Sejanus, whenever it was mentioned, with such contempt, as could not fail to wound the pride of the presumptuous upstart. His insolence in planning such an union gave universal discontent; but Sejanus felt his power, which was too firmly established to render it necessary for him to pay attention to popular opinion. Having obtained the consent of Tiberius, and prevailed on the stupid Claudius to acquiesce, he lost no time in getting the contract signed, and had only to regret that the extreme youth of the parties prevented the immediate solemnization of the nuptials.

nuptials. Agrippina was exceedingly incensed at these proceedings, nor was she sparing of her reproaches to any of the party concerned. She particularly upbraided Claudius with having tarnished the honour of his family by an alliance so much beneath the dignity of an ancient race; and hoped none would be so mean as to congratulate him on a circumstance so truly mortifying.

What Agrippina's remonstrances could not effect, was in a moment produced by an accident, which preserved the blood of the Claudian family from being mingled with that of a Roman knight. The son of Claudius amusing himself by throwing up pears in the air, which he eagerly gaped to catch, received one in his mouth, which getting into his gullet, occasioned immediate suffocation. The melancholy fate of the poor boy was regretted by none so sincerely as by Sejanus, who hoped in the projected marriage to find an excuse for
towering

towering above the rank of a private citizen. The foreboding of mind produced by disappointment rendered the asperities of Agrippina's censure particularly galling to his spirit. In the secret chambers of his heart he held councils of revenge, and while he clothed his countenance in smiles, resolved that she should, at some not distant period, deeply repent of her ill-timed raillery.

While the seeds of hatred were thus ripening in the bosoms of Sejanus and Agrippina, Tiberius, tired of the society which his situation as consul obliged him to frequent, made bad health a pretence for leaving Rome. He suddenly retired into Campania, and there indulged in solitude the gloomy temper of his soul.

No part of the emperor's character was more disagreeable to the people than his aversion to those amusements in which they so much delighted. His dislike they attributed, and most probably with justice, to a temper so austere and unsocial as rendered

dered it impossible for him to participate in the joys of others. The intemperance to which he had from youth been addicted, had indeed, at an early period, appeared to lead to conviviality—the only friendships which he ever made having been formed over the bottle; but wine, though it had casually opened his heart, never softened the moroseness of his temper; and the fear of betraying his designs in a moment of intoxication led him to avoid having witnesses or sharers in his cups.

Drusus, who was as much the friend of Bacchus as his father, delighted not in getting drunk alone; and a sufficient number of jolly companions were at all times ready to join the prince's revels, and to boast of the honour of transforming themselves to beasts in such good company. The spirit with which he entered into the favourite amusements of the populace, endeared him to the mob, who were gratified during his consulate with seeing the blood
of

of gladiators frequently flow upon the stage. Drusus beheld with pleasure the stroke of death, and not only honoured the conqueror by his loud applause, but frequently rewarded him by more substantial marks of favour. By no means could he more effectually have recommended himself to the dregs of the people; but very different was the impression made upon the wise and thinking by a conduct which too plainly indicated a savage hardness of heart.

As the retreat of his father had left to Drusus the conduct of public business, all men were anxious to observe by what principles he was to act. An affair apparently of little moment, though to us extremely interesting, as marking the manners of the times, gave him an early opportunity of gratifying the anxious wishes of his friends, by a display of wisdom and moderation. It happened, that at a late shew of gladiators, Lucius Sylla, a youth of illustrious rank, had refused to give place to an aged senator,

senator, who, though no more than his equal in birth, was much his superior in years. This breach of decorum was thought worthy the attention of the senate, where it occasioned some warm and interesting debates. The cause of Sylla was espoused by his relations, who entered keenly into his defence; but by all the grave and elderly his conduct was condemned, as not only contrary to the practice of what was emphatically called *the good times*, but as it was in express opposition to several decrees in which the reverence due to age had been enforced by the authority of the legislature. The disrespectful behaviour of the young was represented as the most alarming symptom of a general corruption of manners; but while it was thus feelingly lamented, few took the trouble of investigating the cause in which it originated; nor did any accuse himself of having contributed by his own conduct to lessen the respect due to the

hoary head of age. In the violence of party spirit the real merits of the question were about to be forgotten, when Drusus, by a well-timed speech, allayed the ferment, and produced a reconciliation between the parties.

From the result of the next debate Drusus derived no less satisfaction. Cæcina Severus, who had formerly been the colleague of Germanicus in the German wars, in a speech in which he evidently glanced at the conduct of Plancina, moved for a decree to prevent the wives of officers from accompanying their husbands to the provinces. He began by boasting of the harmony that had ever subsisted between him and his wife, though he had never permitted her to go a step from home; and then proceeded to draw such a picture of the female character, as rendered an attachment to any of the sex disgraceful. "Pride, revenge, cruelty, and ambition, were," he said, "the predominant features of the female mind. The love of power was in

them so inordinate as to know no bounds; nor was their avarice less fatal to the provinces, than their ambition. “We have seen,” continued Cæcina, “in a late instance, a woman reviewing the cohorts, and directing the exercise of the legions; nor can we have forgotten, that as often as rapacity and extortion have been laid to the charge of the husband, the wife has proved the principal offender. She no sooner enters a province, than her party is formed; the unprincipled attend to pay their homage. She becomes a politician; she takes the lead in business, and gives a separate audience. Two tribunals are established, and the female edict, dictated by caprice and tyranny, is sure to be obeyed.”

Cæcina was heard by the fathers with impatience, and was immediately answered by Valerius Messalinus, to whom the gift of eloquence had descended from his celebrated ancestor.* The orator, in a speech

* Messala.

replete

replete with wit and humour, and adorned by the still more graceful ornaments of truth and feeling, defended the sex from the unjust imputations of Cæcina. His arguments went to prove, that instead of laying the faults of the husband upon the wife, it would be more just to charge the faults of the wife upon the husband; as, unless where men were weak or uxorious, women could have no opportunity of exceeding the bounds of their own proper sphere. “But they are said to be prone to avarice and ambition,” continued Mes-salinus; “what then shall we say of the magistrates? Have they been always free from irregular passions? And if not, will it follow that *men* are no longer to be trusted with the administration of the provinces? We are told that the vices of the wife influence the manners of the husband; and is it then in a life of celibacy that we are sure of finding unblemished honour?”*

* Tacitus.

The sentiments of the last speaker were supported by Drusus, who vehemently opposed the motion made by Cæcina, which, if passed into a law, would render the service that was to tear him from the arms of an affectionate wife, an irksome bondage. In war, he said, it was indeed proper that men should go unincumbered to the field; but when the campaign was over, where could the general so well repose from toil and labour as in the bosom of a faithful wife, whose tenderness relieves his pain, and sweetens every care? It is almost unnecessary to add, that the motion was lost by a great majority.

While the unsuspecting Drusus was making this public declaration of attachment to a wife whose presence constituted his greatest felicity, the penetrating eyes of Agrippina saw that his confidence was betrayed. Between Agrippina and her sister-in-law there never had been a correspondence of sentiment, but the tie of family

mily connexion was then too much regarded to render it possible for them to avoid a very frequent intercourse; nor could any thing that occurred in the family of the one, be easily concealed from the knowledge of the other. Since the death of Germanicus, Drusus had continued to Agrippina the affection of a brother, and had uniformly treated her children with that generosity and tenderness which excited her warmest gratitude. By their mutual hatred of the same object, these sentiments of esteem were perhaps increased; for so powerfully do the vindictive passions operate, that there is no more common bond of union than sympathy in aversion.

Sejanus, who was too much elated by prosperity to “bear his faculties meekly,” had by his arrogance rendered himself no less odious to Drusus than to Agrippina. Conscious of his power, the haughty favourite forgot the respect that was due to his master’s son. Upon several occasions
he

he treated Drusus with such a degree of insolence as excited his warmest resentment; nor could it be expected, that a prince, little accustomed to control, should in such circumstances be at all times able to command his temper. Hurried away by the impetuosity of his feelings, he one day, on receiving some extraordinary provocation, so far forgot what was due to his own dignity, as to lift his hand against the minister. The blow, which, though given in the heat of passion, was not so severe as to injure the person of Sejanus, inflicted torture on his mind. His proud heart swelled with rage, but its vows of vengeance, though deep, were secret. He appeared satisfied with the apology which Drusus, at the solicitation of his friends, condescended to make, nor left any room to imagine that the reconciliation was not on his part perfectly sincere.

The mortification of Sejanus was increased by observing the triumph it afforded
to

to the whole court. All had been offended by his arrogance, and therefore all were delighted to see it humbled. Agrippina perhaps too openly rejoiced in an incident, which she well knew must inevitably inflict a deep wound on the haughty and overbearing spirit of him whom she had so much cause to hate; but while she thus indulged herself in deriding the pain of Sejanus, she did not consider the danger of aggravating it by her imprudent exultation. Following the example so lately given her by Drusus, she gratified the feelings of the moment, without reflecting on the consequences they were likely to produce.

Drusus, who had no sooner given way to his passion, than he became sensible of the error into which it had betrayed him; was extremely willing to make amends for the indignity he had offered, by an entire forgiveness of the offence which had provoked it. The reconciliation was on his
part

part cordially sincere; and as the affair passed quickly from his mind, he had no idea of its being remembered by Sejanus.

Drusus judged of the heart of Sejanus by his own; but had he made it his business to study human nature, he would have known that no injury was ever forgiven or forgotten by pride and selfishness. It was in vain, that in order to make amends for what was past, he now behaved to the minister with respect and kindness; his advances were received with fawning courtesy. But Drusus ought to have remembered, that the man who is incapable of gratitude and honour, fawns but to deceive. From the moment of receiving the affront, Sejanus was engrossed by schemes of vengeance. Of all the plans which offered to his imagination, none promised to satisfy the cruelty of his vindictive spirit: some were too difficult to be executed with any hopes of success; others were inadequate to his vengeance. While he thus
 meditated

meditated, the idea of Livilla presented itself to his mind. Through her the desire of his heart might be compleatly accomplished. Could she be rendered instrumental in her husband's ruin, he should then indeed enjoy the triumph of revenge! Nor did the conduct of Livilla offer any argument to deter him from the attempt. He knew her to be vain, giddy, and malicious; and doubted not that he should find means by flattery to increase the vanity, and by art to aggravate the spite of a little mind, till, from the mere love of opposition, it might be led to actions, from which at first view it would have revolted with the utmost horror.

Livilla, though now the mother of a married daughter, was not only still handsome, but acknowledged to be even more beautiful than she had been in the bloom of early youth. To a perfect symmetry of person and feature, she added all the blandishments of grace and animation. To be

be admired, was the first object of her wishes; and the vanity which led her to seek for admiration, rendered flattery the most grateful offering to her heart. It was not the attachment of an affectionate husband, or the pious respect of dutiful children, that could gratify a mind which placed its happiness in such puerile objects. Livilla sighed for the glory of new conquests, and with delight did she observe, that the proud heart of Sejanus did homage to her all-powerful charms.

While Sejanus, by slow and cautious advances, insinuated himself into the favour of Livilla, Drusus was occupied by an affair of great importance to his interest. Tiberius, having signified his intention of consigning to him the weight of public business, addressed a request to the senate, for his investiture with the tribunitian dignity, which in fact conferred supreme power upon its possessor. The abject servility of the senate appears, upon this occasion,

occasion, to have been carried so far, as even to have disgusted the man whom they intended to flatter. They not only granted to Drusus a dignity, which, with a name less odious than that of king, conferred a more absolute sovereignty than kings can generally exercise; but, as if they gloried in the mean dereliction of their liberties, added to it every honour which their imaginations could devise. Statues, temples, and triumphal arches, were voted with profusion; and so far did the servile spirit of flattery carry this once venerable body, that a motion was made that the year might no longer take its name from the consuls, but from the persons invested with the tribunitian power.

The senate might, perhaps, have been at any time equally lavish of honours to the son of the emperor; but a recent occurrence had in the present juncture tended to increase its complaisance. Rome still possessed some venerable remnants of the
stoic

stoic school; men of severe and rigid morals, who beheld with indignation the rapid progress of luxury, and ceased not to call loudly for the execution of those penal laws, which they vainly hoped would put an effectual check on its career. Where the ancient laws proved inadequate, they proposed that new decrees should be made, of sufficient efficacy to restore the simplicity of ancient times; and that every indecorum in dress, and every superfluity in the luxuries of the table, should be prohibited by authority.

The vain and the voluptuous anticipated with horror the mortifications to which they should be exposed, if deprived of all that hitherto distinguished them from their fellow-citizens. The ladies were particularly incensed against the agitators of this very unpopular subject, who, in their descriptions of the general corruption of manners, had not been sparing in their censures on the sex. Few, very few, were those who, like Agrippina, could ensure

respect from the acknowledged possession of intrinsic worth. Conscious how much they depended on the splendour of their ornaments, and the richness of their banquets, for even the appearance of regard, it is not surprising that they were alarmed at the prospect that was set before them, of being obliged to regulate their expences by rules and ordinances. Nor were the proposed decrees more agreeable to the modern epicures, one of whom, a person of illustrious rank,* had just condescended to enlighten the world by a book upon cookery, consisting of such expensive receipts as no moderate fortune could supply the means of adopting.

The apprehensions of the degenerate sons and daughters of Rome were relieved by the wisdom of Tiberius. In a letter fraught with good sense, the emperor delivered his opinion to the senate. He proved by many cogent arguments, that

* Note B.

vices which originate in a general corruption of manners, are not to be corrected by the pains and penalties of law “Why,” he asked, “was frugality the practice of ancient times? Not because it was enforced by law, but because each individual was a law to himself, because he knew how to moderate his desires; and because we were then the inhabitants of a single city. That the abuses now complained of are enormous, I have not to learn;” continues the emperor, “but with regard to the evil, the remedy is in the breast of every individual. Men of rank may be restrained by principle, the poor by indigence, the rich by satiety. These are my sentiments.”

The sentiments of Tiberius were in this instance just; and could we give him credit for his motives, would merit our applause. But when we believe his present conduct to have originated in the same dark and insidious policy that marked every
action

action of his reign, we are inclined, even in his wisdom, to find an aggravation of the horror which his character inspires. Though his power was already without controul, he knew that it could not be exercised in acts of injustice and cruelty, without exciting the indignation of the virtuous; and this supposed disapprobation he resented as a crime of the first magnitude. In the gloom of solitude these imaginary offences were the food of his troubled spirit, and created in his soul the insatiable thirst of vengeance. Already had some of the first families in Rome felt the consequences of his hatred; and from the numbers of eminent persons who had been driven into exile, or perished by the hand of the executioner, the public in general might have been roused to a sense of danger. And so undoubtedly it would, had luxury and dissipation left time for serious reflection. But while the pursuit of pleasure, which occupied every mind,

had

had narrowed the heart into sordid selfishness, it had gradually rendered it hard to the sufferings of others; and well did Tiberius calculate, that provided the votaries of dissipation were permitted to ruin themselves in their own way, they would, in their frivolous and guilty joys, find an ample solace for the misery of the whole human race!

CHAPTER II.

Situation of AGRIPPINA.—Prosecution of the Poet LUTORIUS PRISCUS.—Death of JUNIA.—SEJANUS and LIVILLA contrive the Murder of DRUSUS.—Unfeeling Behaviour of TIBERIUS.—He presents the Sons of AGRIPPINA to the Senate.—Arrival of her Friends from Gaul.

A. D. 21—23.

IF in the suspicious soul of Tiberius the secret thoughts of the injured were resented as actual crimes, we need not be surpris'd at his harbouring against Agrippina all the rancour of hatred. She soon found that it was impossible for her, by any mode of conduct, to avoid giving offence

fence. If she could have stooped to flattery and dissimulation, neither flattery nor dissimulation would have availed her. While Tiberius continued to estimate her sense of the injury she had sustained, not by the expression of her feelings but by his own consciousness, a cordial reconciliation with her was impossible. Nor was resentment her only crime. He knew her lofty spirit; and sensible how much she despised the meanness of his dissembling arts, felt himself the object of her contempt.

Agrippina is so universally accused by the Roman historians of being too unguarded in expressing her sentiments, that we must believe her to have been more sincere than prudent; but when we reflect how difficult it is for a generous spirit to suppress its indignation against injustice, and the mean arts by which injustice is supported, we should be more inclined to pity her unfortunate situation, than to blame the consequences into which it betrayed her.

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In her abhorrence of the servile spirit of adulation, she might, perhaps, be led into the opposite extreme ; but with regard to many of the circumstances which daily occurred, she must have been an adept in dissimulation, could she have concealed her feelings.

Among the number of vexatious prosecutions, which had been obviously instituted with no other view than to gratify private malice or resentment, one was about this period commenced, in which Agrippina took a peculiar interest. It was against a man of genius, who had exercised his talents in a way most likely to secure her favour and protection. Lutorius Priscus had, on the death of Germanicus, written an elegy in such an exquisite style of composition, as to obtain universal applause. The grief which flowed so naturally, Agrippina readily believed to be sincere ; she, therefore, with her accustomed liberality rewarded the poet, and recommended

recommended him to the attention of her friends. By her means Priscus had been brought into public notice, and honoured by invitations to many a sumptuous dinner.

While he thus basked in the smiles of fortune, the poor poet very naturally longed for an opportunity of adding to that celebrity from which he daily reaped such solid advantages; and as the elegiac muse had already proved so propitious, we may believe that the prospect of a prince's death was to him an object of no common interest. A fit of illness with which Drusus was at that time seized, fired his imagination with hopes of future glory.

On the first report of the prince's danger, he gave himself up to the fury of composition, and in a few days produced a poem as full of pathos, and perhaps as full of truth, as any elegy upon a great man of little character was ever known to be. Elate with success, the poor poet could not refrain, in the fulness of his heart, from
boasting

boasting of this happy effort of his genius. Nor did the recovery of Drusus silence his vanity. Dining at the house of Publius Petronius with a party of ladies, on being called on to read some of his compositions to the company, he, in an evil hour, produced the elegy, which was heard with much applause by all; but unfortunately mentioned again by some, in a manner that brought an immediate prosecution on the unfortunate author. Vitelia, the mother-in-law of Petronius, and her guests, were cited as evidences of the fact; which was admitted by all but Vitelia, who, as Tacitus expresses it, “had the memory of a liberal-minded woman, and could recollect nothing.” Her liberality did not save the unhappy Priscus. The obsequious senators, willing to gratify Tiberius, who they well knew would not pardon the muse herself for *imagining* the death of a prince, were determined to shew no mercy. A few, indeed, had the temerity to think that
banishment

banishment was a sufficient punishment for the offence; but the majority were of opinion, that death alone could expiate the crime. The wretched poet was accordingly condemned; and that he might have no time to compose an elegy on his own deplorable fate, was hurried to a dungeon, where he was immediately strangled. Tiberius affected to regret the speedy execution of the sentence; but those who best knew his disposition, were least inclined to credit his sincerity. By every person of taste or liberality of sentiment, the fate of the unhappy poet was spoken of with compassion; nor could Agrippina, though convinced, by his subsequent conduct, that the mournful strains which she had considered as a cordial tribute to the virtues of Germanicus were in fact a mere effusion of fancy, forbear to accuse his judges of cruelty and injustice.

The same mean servility which dictated the poet's doom, burst forth in strains of
adulation

adulation on the return of the emperor, who was recalled to Rome by the dangerous illness of his mother, whose advanced age removed all expectation of recovery. The illness of Livia gave alarm to none, save a few mercenary courtiers, who depended on her bounty, or lived under her protection. By those to whom she ought to have been most dear, she was unpitied and unloved. From Agrippina and her children she had indeed nothing but hatred to expect: but Tiberius, the darling son, to whose interests she had sacrificed every feeling of honour and conscience, from him she surely had a right to look for some appearance of gratitude and affection. But for gratitude or affection from Tiberius, Livia looked in vain. In this one instance he disdained to act the hypocrite: and instead of pretending anxiety for her recovery, was at no pains to conceal from her the pleasure he should feel in her removal. Besides the jealousy and hatred, which in
his

his ungenerous mind never failed to accompany the sense of obligation, he had, in the perfect knowledge of his mother's character, subjects for abhorrence and antipathy; for so strangely constituted was the mind of this extraordinary man, that though he hated the virtuous, vice was the object of his decided aversion.

The senate, not daring to dive into the private sentiments of the emperor, adopted none of his apparent indifference. Though Tiberius had peremptorily refused his permission to her being stiled *the mother of her country*, her connexion with the sovereign rendered it prudent to consider her life as an object of importance to the state; and as neglect might have been construed into a crime, flattery assumed the appearance of affliction. Supplications for the recovery of Livia were decreed in a full assembly of the house; temples were promised to the gods by solemn vows; and that nothing might be omitted which was likely to propitiate

pitiate the divinities, the senate voted the performance of the games, a spectacle on which they were supposed to look with great delight. All the pontiffs, augurs, and priests of every denomination, were put in requisition, and Rome was for several days amused by the pomp of processions, and all the gay pageantries of superstition.

Happily for Tiberius, the principles he had adopted saved him from alarm; for had he possessed any faith in the efficacy of prayers and ceremonies, he must have been extremely miserable. But as atheism relieved him from all apprehensions of supernatural interference, he put confidence in Nature, which he thought would not at fourscore be likely to counteract the operation of disease. Notwithstanding the reasonableness of his hopes, Tiberius was disappointed. Livia recovered, and by her recovery occasioned to the senators a joy no less sincere or genuine than their former sorrow.

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The aged empress, who was acquainted with all that had passed, was incensed and mortified by the cold indifference of her son, who on his part made no attempt to conciliate her favour, or to subdue her resentment. Irritated by his conduct, she resolved to take the first opportunity of being revenged; and on being refused the promotion of one of her favourites, she in a fit of passion produced the letters of Augustus, in which the temper and disposition of Tiberius were described in the strongest colours. The instances given of his insolence and brutality in these epistles, left no room to doubt of the opinion which Augustus had formed of his heart.

Nothing could be more galling to Tiberius than this discovery. Far, however, from endeavouring to falsify the charges by increased lenity and moderation, his conduct from this period argued a desire to convince the world of the penetration of his predecessor. He became henceforth
more

more uniformly cruel and severe. As yet, however, he was only cruel towards the objects of his jealousy or resentment. Where his passions did not interfere, he felt no particular gratification in inflicting pain, and in some few instances shewed himself capable of acting with justice and moderation.

A proof that Tiberius could sometimes drop the character of the tyrant, appears in his conduct to Junia, the widow of Cassius. This venerable lady was niece to the celebrated Cato, sister to Brutus, one of the conspirators against Cæsar, and had been married to another; yet was she permitted to live at Rome unmolested, to an extreme old age, in the full possession of wealth and honours. She survived her husband and her brother sixty-four years; and at her death, which happened about this time, disposed of her immense property by will among her friends; but though she left marks of her regard to almost all the

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the eminent men in Rome, she did not pay Tiberius the compliment of a legacy. Contrary to the general expectation, the emperor manifested no displeasure at the omission. He permitted the funeral obsequies of Junia to be performed with more than common magnificence;* and at a period when Rome crouched beneath the feet of a despot, an orator pronounced the panegyric of Cato's niece from the rostrum that had resounded with her brother's defence of Cæsar's murder!

Agrippina, who had imbibed the generous sentiments of Germanicus, could not fail to be pleased with the marks of respect that were shewn to Junia's memory. But still dearer interests now called for her attention. Her son Drusus, having assumed the manly robe, was presented by his uncle to the senate, which liberally bestowed on him the same honours that had been decreed his brother. The two young men were

* Note C.

spoken

spoken of as the hopes of the imperial house; and as the twin-sons of Drusus were but unhealthy infants, their prospects were sufficiently flattering.

Sejanus perceived the hopes of Agrippina's heart, and with fiend-like malice enjoyed the internal assurance of her disappointment. He mean while rose in power, and increased in riches, and while he rapidly advanced to the enjoyment of the highest dignities of the state, saw every subordinate office bestowed on his relatives or dependents. Drusus, enraged by such repeated proofs of inordinate ambition in the upstart favourite, spoke of him in public with contempt, and in the freedom of domestic society, inveighed against his insolence with bitterness and severity. The unsuspecting Drusus knew not, that in the wife of his bosom he harboured a secret spy on all his words and actions. He little thought, that while he in confidence poured out in her ears the secrets of his heart, she
only

only listened to betray. But Livilla had already forfeited her honour. She had permitted Sejanus to triumph over her chastity: and having lost that virtue, which even in the worst of times is in the female mind so inseparably connected with self-respect as to render it impossible to preserve the latter when the former is no more, she quickly resigned every principle which could operate as a restraint upon her conduct. With the feelings of self-respect, all that she owed to her illustrious birth, to her connexions, and to her children, were annihilated, and the adulterer took full possession of her polluted heart.

That Livilla might have no cause of jealousy, Sejanus repudiated a faithful wife, the mother of his three children, an action which no doubt claimed from his mistress a suitable reward. Nor was she backward in interpreting his wishes; nor loath to remove the obstacle which the unwelcome presence of a husband was for ever present-

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ing to the full enjoyment of their criminal love. But from Drusus no divorce could be obtained: it was by death, and death alone, that a separation from him could be effected. It is when at the top of the precipice, that an effort to recede can alone be practised. Livilla had already taken too many steps in the deep descent to be able to stop in her guilty career; from levity she had been led to criminal intrigue, and from intrigue she went on to murder!

However the conduct of Livilla might have been occasionally censured, her reputation had as yet escaped from any particular stain. Agrippina blamed her sister-in-law for forgetting what was due to her own dignity, in exposing her name to be foiled by the petty newsmongers of the court; and resented her intimacy with Sejanus, as a proof of malignancy as well as weakness: but Agrippina entertained no suspicion of her guilt. The consciousness
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of crime, and the fear of detection, rendered the behaviour of Livilla, particularly guarded. Cunning, which serves the wicked as a substitute for wisdom; taught her to elude discovery by the practice of a thousand arts, which seemed at the time to be crowned with success.

The intrigue could not be carried on without confidantes, and in their choice of these the guilty lovers thought themselves extremely fortunate. By Eudemus the attendant physician, and Lygdas a favourite slave, the private meetings had been hitherto managed with secrecy and address. These were now entrusted with their fatal purpose: but though Sejanus had found no difficulty in bribing them to lend assistance in carrying on the amour, they startled at the thoughts of murder. The magnitude of the crime filled their minds with terror. They recollected with horror the danger to which they would expose themselves; and though they might feel little com-

punction with regard to Drusus, shuddered at the idea of the slaughter of his slaves, which would inevitably follow on detection. Sejanus laughed at their fears, but found it no easy matter to hit upon such an expedient as might accomplish his purpose, without a risk of realising their apprehensions. By frequently dwelling on the subject, their passions at length got interested. Various plans were formed and approved, but when on the point of being executed, they were still for one reason or other obliged to be relinquished.

After months of hesitation and delay, the adulterers and their minions acquired resolution enough to perpetrate the deed of horror. A draught of slow poison, prepared by Eudemus, was administered to the unsuspecting prince by the hands of Lygdas; and the hardened Livilla had soon the satisfaction of observing the efficacy of the fatal potion. Eudemus was immediately called for, and confirmed the
abandoned

abandoned wife in her wicked hopes; he, however, persuaded her of the propriety of endeavouring so far to counteract the effects of the deadly draught, as to protract the life and sufferings of her husband for as long a time as possible.

It may at first view appear incredible, that the daughter of Antonia should find it possible thus to divest herself of every feeling of humanity; but when we recollect, that pure selfishness, which is engendered by the indulgence of the sensual appetites, is destructive of sympathy and that the ideas of vice and happiness cannot be connected in the mind, till every generous affection has ceased to operate, we shall consider the remorseless conduct of Livilla as the natural climax of her past depravity. Her heart was hardened by vice, but it was rendered cruel by the fear of detection. It was this which rendered the lengthened torments of Drusus matter of exultation and joy to his murderers, who
regarded

regarded his pretended sufferings as the certain means of escape from all suspicion. Nor were they mistaken in their calculation: Drusus, after lingering for some days in the greatest pain, at length expired; and was universally believed to have fallen a victim to intemperate drinking, a vice in which he too frequently indulged.

Notice of the prince's indisposition had been sent to Tiberius, but as it was represented to have originated in an over-dose of his favourite wine, it occasioned little alarm. Intelligence of his danger was soon after communicated; but neither that, nor even the certain account of his death, seemed to affect the emperor in the manner which might have been expected. The bosom of Tiberius was invulnerable to those tender emotions which the generality of fathers would have experienced on the loss of an only son, expiring in the prime of life* and full vigour of his facul-

* Drusus died in the 37th year of his age. ties.

ties. To what cause shall we attribute an insensibility so remarkable? Was it, that Sejanus had by artful insinuations instilled into his mind a jealousy of Drusus? or was it, that by the frequent indulgence of the malevolent passions, his heart had at length become callous even to the feelings of natural affection? A concurrence of circumstances gives to the latter opinion the greater degree of probability; and when we consider the tendency which every bad passion has to exclude from the mind all those trains of ideas which introduce and cherish the opposite affections, we shall be little inclined to wonder at the conduct of Tiberius upon this occasion. Until the funeral ceremony had taken place, it was deemed indecent for the near relations of the deceased to be seen abroad; but even in this interval, supposed to be devoted to sorrow, Tiberius went to the senate-house, and with an unmoved countenance took his seat. On his unexpected appearance,

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some senators, to whom Drusus had been dear, melted into tears. They were, however, reproved by the emperor for their unmanly weakness, and taught by his example to bear with firmness the inevitable stroke of destiny.

Agrippina, whose heart had been softened by affliction, and whose temper was naturally ardent and affectionate, could not fail to feel for Drusus. But though we have no doubt that her grief was at the moment equally violent and sincere, it was perhaps susceptible of alleviation from the circumstances that succeeded, which seemed to open the prospect of empire on her sons.

The first intelligence she received of the extraordinary step which Tiberius had taken, in going in person to the senate-house, while his son was lying a corpse, was from the messengers he had from thence dispatched for Nero and Drusus, who were desired to hold themselves in readiness for further orders. A second messenger

messenger desired their attendance at the senate, and from him Agrippina learned that the emperor, in an emphatic speech, had told the fathers that the children of Germanicus were the only remaining hope of the people.

The young princes obeyed with alacrity the welcome summons; and before they reached the senate-house, had the honour of being met by the consuls, who had come on purpose to conduct them to the emperor, and to prepare their minds for the august and impressive scene. Tiberius, taking a hand of each, presented them to the senate with the following address:

“These orphans, conscript fathers, I delivered to the care of their uncle; and though he was blessed with issue, I desired that he would cherish them as his own, and train them up in a manner worthy of himself and of posterity. But Drusus is no more. I now turn to you, and in the presence of the Gods, in the hearing of my country,

country, I implore you to take under your protection the great-grand-children of Augustus. Adopt the issue of an illustrious line ; support them ; raise them ; mould them at your pleasure for the good of the state ; perform at once my duty and your own. And as for you Nero, and you Drusus, in this assembly you behold your fathers. Born, as you are, in the highest station, your lot is such, that nothing good or evil can befall you, without affecting at the same time the interest of the commonwealth."

While Tiberius spoke, every eye glistened with delight. Tears bore testimony to the sincerity with which the whole assembly vowed fidelity and attachment to the sons of Germanicus ; nor did the sweet and modest deportment of Nero fail to make such an impression in his favour as augmented every sentiment of regard.

How acceptable the account of this day's transactions were to the heart of the
fond

fond mother, it would be superfluous to mention. The rank of her children was now ascertained; their promotion was inevitable; and already did she anticipate the day when Nero, the darling of her heart, should be the pride and glory of the Roman world.

The funeral of Drusus was decreed by the senate to be equally splendid with that of Germanicus. In one instance it was more strikingly magnificent, as it was honoured by a procession of images representing the illustrious ancestors of the Julian and Claudian lines. The spectacle gratified the pride of the relations, and the curiosity of the populace; but the tears of genuine grief which bedewed the bier of Germanicus, shed a lustre on the final scene more striking and impressive than statues of gold or silver could produce.

Tiberius, who, it will be remembered, was on the former occasion disabled by the excess of affliction from attending the ceremony,

ceremony, not only appeared as chief-mourner at the funeral of his son; but when the long procession reached the Forum, in the way to the place appointed for the burning of the body, mounted the rostra, and pronounced a long oration over the corpse. The emperor was on this occasion supported by Sejanus, who stood by his side, and watched with delight the hard expression of his unfeeling countenance. In the insensibility that was there so plainly evident, the wicked favourite read impunity to future crimes; and while the speech of Tiberius drew tears from a great part of the audience, it operated upon him as an encouragement to more atrocious deeds.

As the virtues of Drusus were entirely of the negative kind, he was soon forgotten, even by his friends; and so dear was the memory of Germanicus to the people, that an event which seemed to secure to his posterity the possession of the empire, was deemed by them as auspicious to Rome.

Agrippina

Agrippina had now reason to hope that the persecutions of fortune were at an end. The sun of prosperity began to dawn upon her house; nor can she be blamed for rejoicing in its beams. But however she might be elated by the hopes of having her ambition gratified by the exaltation of her children, her heart was not so narrow as to embrace no other objects; and her felicity was at present increased by the success of friends, in whom she took the warmest interest.

Caius Silius, the companion of Germanicus in all his campaigns in Germany, and his successor in the command of the armies on the Rhine, had lately gathered fresh laurels from quelling a formidable insurrection in Gaul. Beloved by the army, approved by the emperor, and honoured by the thanks of the senate, Silius had attained his utmost ambition; and having restored the province to tranquillity, cheerfully obeyed the commands of the emperor in returning to Rome.

Agrippina entertained for both Silius and his wife the liveliest sentiments of regard; and as she was a stranger to a cold medium in her friendship, she expressed with warmth her opinion of their worth, and the sincerity of her attachment. On their arrival at Rome, a renewal of their former intimacy took place: Sofia Galla, the wife of Silius, endeared to Agrippina by a thousand tender recollections, was again the chosen companion of her days, and sharer of her confidence. The time they had formerly passed together in the wilds of Germany, the hardships they had mutually endured, and mutually softened to each other, and all the various incidents which had taken place since the hour of their separation, afforded such a variety of interesting themes, as to render it impossible for them to tire in each other's company.

Nor was Silius less the object of Agrippina's regard; nor did the terms in which he ever spoke of Germanicus, fail to add

to her esteem, feelings of the most lively gratitude. The same feelings were called forth towards his colleague Titius Sabinus, who had likewise been honoured with her husband's friendship, and who shewed how worthy he had been of the regard of Germanicus, by the steadiness of his attachment to the family of his benefactor.

At present, indeed, it was perhaps difficult for Agrippina to discriminate between real and pretended friends, as the latter were probably most assiduous in paying their court, and most vehement in their professions of attachment: but she could not be wrong in singling out for the objects of her peculiar regard, those who had been distinguished by Germanicus for wisdom or integrity. In this respect Agrippina seems always to have acted with the most laudable prudence; nor does she appear, in any one instance, to have been betrayed by vanity into a partiality for those who had the merit of knowing how to flatter.

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She was pleased and gratified by the attentions which she thought due to her situation, and was therefore gracious to all who sought her interest, or endeavoured to recommend themselves by an appearance of zeal in her service; but she reserved her friendship for those whose virtues entitled them to her esteem. When a person of her exalted rank can thus weigh the merit of those by whom they are surrounded in the impartial scale of truth, it affords the most decisive proof of their principles and penetration. To the honour of Agrippina, those whom she disliked were the slaves of vice, while all she professed to love were in the interests of virtue.

CHAPTER III.

SEJANUS and AGRIPPA compared.—*Ambitious Views of SEJANUS.—Treacherous Arts employed against AGRIPPINA.—Zeal of the Pontiffs in Favour of the young CÆSARS, resented by TIBERIUS.—CAIUS SILIUS unjustly prosecuted; his death.—Banishment of SOSIA.—AGRIPPINA's Grief.—Death of one of the twin Sons of DRUSUS.—Conduct of SEJANUS upon that Event; continues to rise in Favour and Dignity.*

A. D. 23—24.

WHILE Agrippina was indulging in the sweets of friendship, which, by giving a constant exercise to the benevolent affections, banished the malevolent from the heart; Sejanus was taking counsel of every infernal spirit for her destruction.

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That the good or bad qualities of men are developed by the circumstances in which they happen to be placed, is too obvious to admit of dispute. But when from the abundant proofs of this, we are led so far as to imagine that they depend solely upon these, and that circumstances instead of being the soil in which vice or virtue germinates, are the creating power which calls them into existence, we run into an error equally dangerous in its tendency, and contrary to truth. As the scepticism with regard to principle which is thus created, is often attended by the most fatal consequences; it will not be departing from the design of this work, if we for a moment stop the thread of the narrative, to compare the conduct of two men, who were placed in circumstances so nearly similar, that according to the philosophers who attribute every thing to circumstances, their conduct ought to have been the same. Marcus Vipfanius Agrippa, the father of Agrippina,

Agrippina was, like Sejanus, of low extraction. Like him he had been raised from an humble station to the first dignities of the state. Both drank deeply of the intoxicating cup of power: the authority of Agrippa, like that of Sejanus, knew no restraint. Each in his time commanded the treasures of the empire; each beheld the lives as well as fortunes of his fellow-citizens at his disposal; nor can we believe that the son-in-law of Augustus was less exposed to the insidious poison of flattery, than the minister of Tiberius. Whence then the difference in their characters? Why did not Agrippa, instead of retaining in the lap of luxury the simplicity of ancient manners, become, like Sejanus, dissolute and intemperate? Why did not the possession of wealth create in him the same avidity of accumulation? Why did not power excite in him the same thirst of cruelty and revenge? To what but to the difference in their principles, can we

attribute a difference so glaring in every point of conduct? The principles of honour, integrity, and justice, had been by education so deeply riveted in the mind of Agrippa, that the sunshine of prosperity could not dissolve, nor the storms of adversity shake them. The early youth of Sejanus had, on the contrary, been devoted to vice: in the gratification of the selfish and the sensual passions all his ideas of happiness were comprised. That elevation of fortune which had strengthened in Agrippa the noble ambition of being useful to his country, excited in Sejanus the desire of trampling on its liberties. Inebriated by success, he grasped at dominion, and in his eagerness overlooked the gulph into whose jaws he was at length precipitated!

The death of Drusus first opened on Sejanus the faint glimmerings of a prospect, which, even at the mighty distance from which it was beheld, had sufficient charms to occupy his imagination, and to rouse
the

energies of his soul. Between him and the object of his wishes, many, it is true, were the obstacles that yet remained. Of these obstacles, the sons of Drusus were the least formidable; as the flagitiousness of the mother left him no room to doubt of her assistance in compassing their destruction. But the sons of Germanicus were now of an age to assert their own rights, and to protect their own interests; they were, moreover, guarded by the vigilance of a mother whose virtue was impregnable.

Sejanus, on revolving all these circumstances in his mind, might in despair have relinquished the enterprize, had not the recollected success of Livia re-inspired his hopes. The grandsons of Augustus were equal in number to the sons of Germanicus; but though protected by the arm of Cæsar, they were unable to defend themselves against the treacherous arts of a woman, who was ambitious of seeing her son
clothed

clothed in the imperial robes. Why should he do less for himself, than Livia had done for another? Or why should he fear that fortune would be less favourable to him, than she had proved to Livia? The murder of Drusus had not only passed with impunity, but without a single symptom of public regret. Why then should he hesitate to proceed in a career, which had commenced with such auspicious omens? Though Agrippina was not, like Livilla, vulnerable to the arts of flattery, her very virtues might be converted into engines of destruction. The warmth and sincerity of her friendships, the ardour with which she expressed her sentiments, the loftiness of her spirit, and the unbending detestation which she openly displayed towards every species of meanness and hypocrisy, might all, with proper management, be rendered instrumental to her ruin: and her ruin was so necessary a preliminary to the destruction of her children, that without
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the one, the other could not possibly be effected.

Sejanus, having wrought himself up to this determination, laid his plans before Livilla; who entered eagerly into all his views, and promised her utmost assistance towards their accomplishment. Complaisance to Sejanus was not the only motive that inspired this ready acquiescence to his will. Her hatred to Agrippina was sincere. The restraint under which she laboured in her presence had long been intolerable, and was augmented by the consciousness of her own increased unworthiness. Every glance which darted from her sister's penetrating eyes, was now a cause of alarm; and every word she uttered, was felt as a reproach: and that deportment at once so easy and so dignified, which spoke a mind at peace with itself, and which required no effort to command respect, excited envy in the breast of Livilla, while it inspired awe. Most willingly,
therefore,

therefore, did she enter into the councils of her paramour, to whom she had already sacrificed the feelings of honour and the virtues of humanity. As it was among the gay, the licentious, and the depraved, that her intimacies had been chiefly cultivated, it was easy for her to select from the groupe a sufficient number of instruments entirely suited to their present purpose; and as the suspicious temper of Tiberius rendered it necessary for them to be extremely cautious in their proceedings, they resolved, having once laid the train, to stand aloof, and to leave to their agents the management of the explosion.

Among the persons chosen to assist in their iniquitous designs, Julius Posthumus held the first place in their confidence; and certainly he had all the claims that perfect congeniality of character could give, to entitle him to that distinction. This profligate had been introduced to the favour of the old empress by one of
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the ladies of her court, with whom he had long been engaged in an adulterous intercourse; and as he had great influence over the partner of his guilt, who was much in the confidence of Livia, every falsehood which he chose to fabricate, had by this means an easy method of circulation.

How far Agrippina might have had it in her power to conciliate the affections of her grandmother, by a series of those hollow attentions which are acceptable to pride even when known to be insincere, it is impossible to determine; for it was not in the nature of Agrippina to adopt a conduct she despised. Nor is it probable that in this instance the attempt would have been attended with success. Livia knew too well how much she deserved to be detested by the descendants of her husband, to receive their attentions without suspicion of deceit: in the choice of all her favourites she was probably influenced by this consciousness, since to be the enemy
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of Agrippina seems to have been a necessary preliminary to her regard. On this basis her attachment to Plancina was very obviously founded; and as several of the other ladies of her court had, like Plancina, not only outraged all the laws of decency in their conduct, but so far violated every principle of justice, as to render themselves obnoxious to the severest punishments of the legislature, it would be difficult upon any other grounds to account for her partiality.*

The retirement in which Agrippina lived during the first three years of her widowhood, afforded little opportunity for malice to gratify itself by inventing any thing to her prejudice. But now that she

* Of the favourites of Livia, Plancina, as we have already seen, had been prosecuted on a charge of poisoning. Mutilia Prisca was known to have a criminal intercourse with Julius Posthumus. Urqulania was prosecuted for fraud, and convicted through the perseverance of the prosecutor, though openly protected by Livia.

again appeared in the world, supported by sons who were fast rising into honour and preferment; and surrounded by friends, who were of the first character and dignity; envy not only sharpened the darts which malignity had hitherto been obliged to conceal, but found a way for them to penetrate.

The warm eulogiums which Agrippina's conduct drew not only from her particular friends, but from all who were capable of admiring virtue, were construed into a proof of a designing and intriguing spirit, which endeavoured to make partisans among the people. The praises which were bestowed on her were therefore repeated with such aggravations as were best suited to create alarm. Even her affection to her children, and the zeal with which she watched over their conduct, and their interests, was maliciously turned into a crime, and represented as an evidence of her ambitious views. By calumnies such as these the
 hatred

hatred of Livia was rekindled; and though it was long since Tiberius and she had been on terms of friendship, such numerous channels for communicating her sentiments still remained open, that he was easily made partaker of her jealousy and resentment.

A circumstance soon occurred, which was particularly well calculated to work upon the tyrant's mind. The pontiffs, perhaps at the suggestion of Sejanus, perhaps out of respect for the young princes, had thought proper to blend with the solemn vows which they offered for the safety of the emperor, the names of Nero and Drusus. The example of the pontiffs was followed by the whole order of priests, and Tiberius heard with indignation that the sons of Germanicus were thus exalted to a level with himself. From the hints which he had already received, Tiberius instantly conceived Agrippina to be the instigator of the priests in this presumptuous conduct. He sent for the pontiffs, and commanded

commanded them, upon pain of his displeasure, to say, whether it was by sollicitation, or by menaces, that Agrippina had prevailed on them to join the names of her sons with his. The pontiffs declared the innocence of Agrippina, and protested her total ignorance of their intentions, and by their declaration assuaged the rising tempest. Tiberius did not, however, let the matter stop here. He addressed the senate upon the business, and warned all the members of that assembly, that they should beware of inflaming the minds of young men with such an opinion of their own consequence, as could only inspire them with a spirit beyond their station.

Sejanus rejoiced to see that the seeds of jealousy had already begun to ferment. He was not the first to speak; but when Tiberius disclosed to him his sentiments upon the subject, he did not fail, by dark hints and insinuations, to impose a belief that he had long been impressed with apprehensions

prehenſions of the moſt alarming nature. Rome, he ſaid, was already divided into factions. There were men—men even of high rank—perſons of influence in the ſtate, and of authority in the armies—who did not ſcruple to avow themſelves the partiſans of Agrippina. Agrippina was undoubtedly a virtuous woman. Her character as a wife, had, he verily believed, been irreproachable. But her ambition—he hoped he had been miſinformed—but her ambition was, he feared, unbounded. Excuses, however, ought to be made for the weakneſs of her ſex. Women are naturally vain; and if ſhe boaſted of her birth as ſuperior to that of thoſe to whom ſhe owed allegiance, it ought to be attributed to her folly. But while her pretenſions were ſupported by men of high reputation, who daily increaſed the numbers of her party; thinking people, friends of the emperor, and of the ſtate, could not but tremble at the conſequences that might enſue!”

Sejanus

Sejanus was too well acquainted with the temper of his master, not to be assured that the suspicions which he had thus carefully engrafted, would, in due time, produce their proper fruits. Tiberius determined that the Roman nobility should not long be ignorant of the danger to which they exposed themselves by a zealous attachment to the family of Germanicus. Sejanus approved his resolution, though at the same time he expressed his deep regret at the cruel necessity that imposed it. It was not by the sacrifice of a luke-warm friend, or an inferior partisan, that a salutary terror could be spread: the victim must not only be high in station, but distinguished in character, and so apparently deserving as to leave no room to doubt of the real cause of the emperor's vengeance.

In all these respects none appeared so fit to be singled out for an example, as Caius Silius. The friendship that had ever subsisted between him and Germanicus, was
known

known to all the world: nor had death extinguished his affection, since it was still extended to all the dearest objects of his friend's regard. For these and similar crimes Silius had become particularly obnoxious. But as the real grounds of offence were not such as could be formally mentioned in his accusation, and as his wife's connexion with Agrippina, with whom she was known to live in terms of the strictest amity, was a fact of equal notoriety, it was expedient, in order to remove every doubt, that Sofia, as well as Silius, should perish.

Agrippina, meanwhile, ignorant that the net was forming in whose meshes she was so soon to be entangled, indulged in the bright dreams of security and happiness, which the prosperous circumstances of her family, and the flattering attentions of her friends, so naturally inspired. Her manners, which to those she loved were at all times particularly engaging, were rendered more attractive by the assurance
of

of her sincerity. While the warmth of her heart inclined her to social intercourse, the ingenuousness of her temper prevented her from laying that restraint upon the communication of her sentiments, which suspicion, under the name of prudence, so often inculcates as a duty. With those she had once admitted to her confidence, Agrippina knew no reserve : but while she thus frankly declared her opinion upon every subject, she knew not that every word was watched, and that in the attendants on her person she harboured spies who were suborned to betray her.

It was by her sister-in-law Livilla, that this notable atchievement had been planned. By the assistance of the infamous Mutilia, (the mistress of Julius Posthumus) she had succeeded in corrupting some of the most favourite attendants of Agrippina, who were not only instructed to give a faithful report of all that passed, but to endeavour to lead to the introduction of such topics,

as

as when again reported to Tiberius, would be most likely to make a deep impression on his mind. These servile wretches performed to admiration the infamous task that had been assigned them, and had an early opportunity of evincing their diligence.

In the midst of the most perfect calm that she had ever experienced, when the horizon appeared without a cloud, and no rising wave gave notice of the approaching storm, Agrippina was suddenly awakened from her dream of security and enjoyment by the shipwreck of her friends! No words can describe her astonishment, on receiving the first intelligence of the accusation which had been brought against Silius! She scarcely could believe it possible, that a nobleman who in the consulship held the first dignity of the state, should stoop so far as to become the servile agent of Sejanus, and voluntarily take upon himself the office of public accuser. Of the innocence of her friend she entertained not
the

the remotest doubt; but was far from being satisfied with his apparent want of spirit on the opening of the business.

Silius, thunderstruck by the unexpected blow, made on the first hearing no other appeal to justice, than to request that the trial might be deferred, till the consul who had become his accuser should be out of office. But this would by no means have answered the designs of Tiberius, who, in a speech as full of artifice as of malignity, pleaded the precedents of former times as an authority for the proceedings of the consul, and concluded by giving his vote for entering on the trial without a day's delay.

It may easily be imagined what indignation this conduct excited in Agrippina's ardent mind. She exclaimed against Tiberius without reserve. She accused him of an equal portion of perfidy and ingratitude, and did not scruple to attribute his machinations against Silius to that abhorred

pride which converts the sense of obligation into a cause of hatred. "Yes," she exclaimed, "Silius has done too much for his country, to be forgiven! His zealous loyalty to the emperor preserved his soldiers in allegiance, when the standard of revolt was raised in every other camp. He by his exertions prevented the province of Gaul from being severed from the Roman empire. By conquering the renowned Sacrovir, he saved the state. These are the crimes of Silius! these the unpardonable offences he has committed! Like Germanicus, he devoted his life to the service of his country; like him, he has been successful; and like him, he must now perish!"

By such expressions as these did Agrippina vent her indignation against Tiberius, on being made acquainted with what had passed in the senate. Still, however, she did not believe it possible that the fathers would be brought to acquiesce in the condemnation

demnation of a man whose conduct had been so meritorious. She recollected the instances in which they had dared to differ in opinion from the emperor, without apparently incurring his resentment; and flattered herself they would not now be so destitute of all spirit, as tamely to permit such a man as Silius to perish. It is almost unnecessary to say how ill-founded were those hopes by which Agrippina now endeavoured to revive the sinking spirits of her ill-fated friends. She did not recollect that the corruption of public bodies of men is, like the depravity of individuals, progressive; that even after the sense of honour is extinct, shame for a while operates as a restraint, to keep them within the bounds of decency; but that when once this feeling has been lost, they not only become capable of committing all manner of iniquity, but commit it "with greediness." "The age," says Tacitus, "was sunk to the lowest depths of sordid
adulation,

adulation, infomuch that not only the most illustrious citizens, in order to secure their pre-eminence, were obliged to crouch and bend the knee; but men of consular and prætorian rank, and the whole body of the senate, tried with emulation which should be the most obsequious slave. ‘Devoted men!’ Tiberius was heard to say, in going from the senate, ‘devoted men! how they rush headlong into bondage!’ Even he, the enemy of civil liberty, despised the voluntary slave.”

Such was the character of that assembly which was now summoned to go through the empty forms of justice in the trial of Caius Silius. Agrippina waited with anxiety for an account of the proceedings of the day; but too soon did the tidings arrive which were to pierce her friendly heart.

Nothing could be more absurd than the charges brought forward by the consul; they consisted of two articles, so frivolous in their nature as to afford the strongest testimony

testimony to the upright conduct of a man against whom malice could find nothing of more importance. A secret correspondence with Sacrovir, the Gaulish rebel, whom his valour had subdued, constituted the whole of the first charge. The second was to him more serious, as it involved interests far dearer than his own : in being accused of having connived at the acts of rapacity and oppression that had been committed by his wife, he saw the scope and meaning of the black transaction ; and that for her friendship to the widow of Germanicus, Sofia was doomed to suffer. The pride of Silius would not permit him to enter on a defence against charges so unfounded. Resting on the consciousness of his integrity, he only broke silence to shew that he was not ignorant of the quarter from which the arm of oppression had been raised against him. The pusillanimous conduct of the senate in thus basely yielding themselves as implements of a tyrant's

rant's vengeance, excited in the honest breast of the soldier a degree of contempt beyond the power of words to describe. By looks alone he expressed his indignation; but when he retired from the bar, and reflected on the ignominy of the death that awaited him, he felt that he had not fortitude to sustain the shock. This world was all to Silius. Fame, indeed, that phantom of imagination, might seem to hover over his grave, doing justice to the memory of the dead, and rescuing from oblivion a name which malice had vainly endeavoured to tarnish. But this hope was not of a nature that could elevate the mind above the reach of temporal evil. The idea it presented was soothing to pride, but it did not impart that strength to the soul, which, in similar situations, has been derived from principles that enable the christian to submit with meekness, and to sustain with fortitude, all that the injustice or cruelty of his fellow-creatures can inflict.

flit. Silius found it impossible to support the stroke of adverse fortune with any degree of firmness; and without any consideration for her who had been the partner of his life, and who must by his death be involved in deeper misery than she had yet experienced, he resolved to put a period to his existence. The design was speedily executed, and the unfortunate Sofia was left to bear as she might be able, the accumulating sorrows of her destiny.

Tiberius expressed much indignation on hearing that Silius had dared to escape his vengeance. As he had died before sentence had been pronounced, his property ought by the laws to have been secured to his children. In spite of law and justice the senate were prevailed upon to confiscate the treasure and estates of Silius; and no sooner had the sentence of confiscation passed, than Tiberius, at the instigation of his minister, seized upon the whole as a lawful prize! Sofia meanwhile was brought
up

up to receive the iniquitous sentence of her venal judges. She was condemned to banishment; and all that Marcus Lepidus, the only senator who dared to speak in her behalf, could by the exertion of his eloquence procure in her favour, was, that a fourth of her private property only should be forfeited to the prosecutors, and that her children should be permitted to enjoy the rest. These children, stripped of the fortunes of their ancestors, deprived of all that the liberality of Augustus had bestowed, and of all that their father had acquired in the course of so many years of honourable and lucrative employment, were now to be turned adrift into the world in a state of utter destitution. While their father's ashes were yet warm, their wretched mother was mercilessly torn from their embraces. Her sentence precluded the alleviations of friendship, and deprived her of all those tender attentions which
 might

might have softened the severity of her affliction.

Agrippina beheld from a distance the departure of her friend, and would have sunk into hopeless sorrow, had not the feelings of indignation and resentment roused her mind from the torpor of grief by emotions still more painful. She could entertain no doubt, that their attachment to her had been the cause of her friends' misfortunes; but this consideration, though it increased her feelings for them, did not excite alarm for herself; she at present too much despised Tiberius to fear him.

The sentiments of Agrippina would probably have been suggested to Tiberius by conscience, had every other voice been silent; but not one expression in the warmth of passion escaped her lips, which was not reported. Nor was it she alone that suffered by this infernal treachery, as the friends to whom she most freely unbosomed every thought, were equally exposed to the tyrant's

rant's resentment. Of these friends none appears to have possessed a greater share of her affection than her cousin, Claudia Pulchra, the widow of Quintillius Varus, that unfortunate commander, who with his legions perished in Germany, as has been related.* In the fidelity and attachment of this relation and friend of her early youth, Agrippina found the most effectual consolation for every sorrow: the ties which bound them to each other were knit more closely by every event in which either was interested; and the bond of mutual esteem was indissolubly cemented by sympathy.

The fate of Silius might operate as a warning on the minds of those courtly parasites whose attentions are measured out by no other scale than that of self-interest: but Agrippina had many friends who were superior to the meanness that marks the minions of fortune. Openly as the disposition of Tiberius had been displayed, these

* See vol. i. chap. vii.

were

were not deterred, by the fear of incurring his displeasure, from continuing to Agrippina and her family the most devoted attachment. And while the servile crew who did homage to Sejanus affected to treat her with coldness or reserve, she received from the first characters in the empire the most unequivocal testimonies of respect.

Sejanus, on his part, so far from being mortified by the increased zeal of Agrippina's friends, secretly rejoiced at every new proof of her popularity, which he took pains to exaggerate in such a manner as he knew would most sensibly irritate the jealous temper of his master. By reporting the most illustrious citizens as her partizans, he artfully prepared the way for their destruction; and in thus exciting the fears of Tiberius, kept alive a slow consuming fire, which he could at pleasure aggravate into fury.

The death of one of the twin-sons of Drusus, which happened about this time,
tended

tended to elate the spirits of Sejanus, and to inspire him with even more than usual confidence. Whether the child fell a victim to any of the diseases of infancy, or whether he was sent by a medicine from Eudamus to his untimely grave, appears uncertain; but as Tiberius was evidently mortified by the event, the minister and courtiers could not be otherwise than overwhelmed with sorrow. As to Agrippina, it was equally dangerous for her upon such an occasion to wear the air of grief or unconcern; her grief was attributed to hypocrisy, her indifference to the secret triumph of ambition. She was represented as exulting in the misfortune which had befallen the family of Tiberius, and boasting of the superior strength of her own offspring; and this at the moment when the sudden death of her nephew had inspired the most anxious thoughts. She contemplated the instability of those hopes which are inspired by the promising appearance of the opening blossom,

blossom, and with a mother's feelings
 shuddered at the prospect. Her sons had
 indeed escaped the dangers of infancy, but
 to how many dangers were they still expo-
 sed? Was it not possible, that they might
 yet have reason to envy the peaceful lot
 of the son of Drusus, cut off before he
 had tasted of the cup of misery? Such were
 the reflections which naturally suggested
 themselves to one who, like Agrippina,
 had been inured to sorrow. The train of
 melancholy ideas to which they gave rise,
 were however, dissipated by feelings of
 an opposite tendency, on beholding the
 pretended grief of Sejanus. Agrippina
 could feel nothing but contempt for artifice
 and affectation; and what she felt, she ex-
 pressed with tolerable energy. It is pro-
 bable that her remarks were sent home
 by conscience to the bosom of Sejanus, and
 thus were made to cut even more deeply
 than she had intended; but it is certain,
 that in reporting them to Tiberius, he
 took

took care to give them such a turn as best suited his own malicious designs.

The emperor was made to understand, that the zeal which his worthy minister had displayed, was particularly offensive to Agrippina, and that if he pursued the plan which attachment to the interests of his master's family prescribed, he should incur her everlasting resentment. All this he declared was nothing to him, so long as he could render any service to those to whom he was devoted; the memory of Drusus was dear to his affections; and he should consider it his duty to watch with jealous eye over the conduct of those who now triumphed in the misfortunes which so nearly affected the imperial house!

By such insinuations, Sejanus kept alive the resentment which had maintained a place in the heart of Tiberius, who, flattered by the apparent zeal of his minister, lost no opportunity of attaching him still further to his interests. Honours, such as
never

never before had been conferred on a person of equal rank, were lavished on the unworthy favourite. The command of the pretorian bands, those domestic troops which were at once the support of despotism and the dread of the despot, raised him to a degree of power superior to control. His image, stationed beside the gods of the camp, was worshipped by the soldiers! Nor did the idolatrous homage of the pretorians satisfy his pride; a formal permission was granted by Tiberius, and ratified by the senate, for having the statue of Sejanus erected in the theatre of Pompey, beside those of the illustrious heroes of former times; and such adepts were the Romans now become in the art of flattery, that the image of the minister had as many worshippers as those of the gods.

These accumulated honours elated the spirit of Sejanus; but they brought not the sweets of contentment to his heart. The more that his pride was inflamed by prosperity,

prosperity, the less did he taste of satisfaction; but instead of reflecting, that in his own malignant passions he might find the true cause of his infelicity, it was Agrippina and her family that he looked upon as the source of all his discontent. While they continued to flourish, they presented such an obstacle to his ambitious views, as darkened every prospect of enjoyment; could they be removed, his happiness would doubtless be compleat !

In the gloomy mind of Tiberius, Sejanus perceived a still greater degree of uneasiness and dissatisfaction than he himself experienced; and it must be confessed, that in having a definite object to which he might still direct his views, he possessed an advantage over his master, who had already arrived at all that ambition could desire.

Tiberius was satiated with power; but notwithstanding that satiety, he continued to experience the voracious cravings of
ungratified

ungratified self-will, and was impelled by a sense of misery to seek in the indulgence of every present passion for that relief which the wicked are doomed for ever to pursue, and never to obtain. Cruelty, which had at first been only an attendant on the desire of revenge, was now gradually advancing by indulgence into the rank of a primary passion, in the gratification of which his depraved heart tasted a feverish joy. Tho' he delighted not in the good-will of his fellow-creatures, he failed not to hate those by whom he suspected himself to be detested; and with the restlessness of suspicion, endeavoured to pry into the secret thoughts of men concerning his actions. Sejanus, taking advantage of this disposition, recommended himself by the address with which he marshalled a regular band of spies and informers, who, by making to him a report of all that passed at the tables of the senators and other distinguished citizens, laid all Rome at his mercy. So low

were the Romans now sunk, that the trade of an informer actually came into repute: and men who had basely betrayed the sacred duties imposed by hospitality and friendship, nay even those who had sold the blood of their fellow-citizens, were received into what was then stiled by the votaries of fashion *the best company*. It is almost needless to remark, that morals must indeed have been at a low ebb, when the fortune acquired by the basest of actions, could pave a way into society for him who had committed it. But the love of pleasure had now succeeded to the love of glory, and pleasure is so little discriminating in its choice of associates, as to think none unwelcome who can contribute to the selfish gratification of the present hour!

CHAPTER IV.

Miscellaneous Events and Observations.—

LIVILLA prevails on SEJANUS to ask her in Marriage of the Emperor; TIBERIUS refuses his Consent.—Increasing Tyranny of TIBERIUS; his Discontent.—Arts of SEJANUS.—Prosecution of the Historian CREMUTIUS CORDUS.—Prosecution of CLAUDIA PULCHRA.—Zeal of AGRIPPINA.—Her behaviour to TIBERIUS.

A. D. 24—26.

AGRIPPINA could neither be insensible to the calamities which threatened the public, nor to the perils by which she was herself encompassed. Both were frequently the subject of serious conversation with her friends. But though untainted with that frivolity which can
lightly

lightly dismiss from the mind every important object, as soon as the contemplation becomes painful; she enjoyed, in common with all persons of the same temperament, that happy elasticity of spirits, which prevents the mind from sinking under the view of evils that are uncertain or remote. In the delightful certainty of possessing, and in the still more delightful consciousness of deserving, the esteem and attachment of her friends, she had a fund of happiness on which she drew for present enjoyment: and if the tears of sympathy were often made to flow, the feelings that produced them, by increasing the tendency to benevolence, must have increased that tranquil satisfaction, which is the surest basis of felicity. Of this pure and fertile source of happiness, the machinations of her enemies could never have deprived her, had she been able to control the turbulence of the vindictive passions, and to subdue the pride by which they were so often kindled.

Injustice

Injustice and perfidy might then have excited her indignation and abhorrence, without producing the violent emotions of anger, hatred, or revenge. Mistress of these, Agrippina might indeed have been an object of envy to Tiberius, for all his malice could not then have utterly destroyed her peace.

To a superficial observer Tiberius would at this time have appeared the object of universal love. In proportion as the tyranny which he had established became odious and severe, flattery became more servile and assiduous. At first he was only stiled *the best of princes*, he was now to be worshipped as a god. Ambassadors from the further Spain arrived at Rome with the humble petition of the province, which prayed for leave to build a temple to the emperor and his mother, where they might receive the adoration of the people. Tiberius declined the honour, but thought it necessary to apologise to the senate for this
act

act of self-denial; which was blamed by some as a species of false modesty unworthy of his situation, in which the love of glory ought to be the primary principle. Such were the notions then entertained concerning the objects of a glorious ambition! The sentiments of Tiberius were indeed in this respect more just than those of his contemporaries. In his speech to the ambassadors, delivered in the senate, he observes, that “to be worshipped in the esteem and affections of men would be the best and most lasting monument; and that piles of stone and structures of marble, when the idol in the judgment of posterity rises to execration, are mere charnel-houses that moulder into ruin.” It seems extraordinary that a man who could so well perceive the path that leads to solid fame, should have in his actions gone so widely astray from it!

Compliments that were so evidently paid to the power of the sovereign, would not
be

be likely to offend the prejudices of Agrippina. When Sejanus became the object of adulation, the case was extremely different. She regarded the distinctions with which he was already honoured, as derogatory to the dignity of the imperial house; and could not think with patience, that a man of his humble origin should presume to appear upon a footing with the young Cæsars. To his plans of further exaltation she was as yet a stranger; but these were in due time developed.

Two years had now elapsed since the death of Drusus; and Livilla, tired of the restraint which the fear of discovery imposed on her secret connexion with Sejanus, urged him to the bold step of asking her in marriage of the emperor. The crafty minister, who feared that he might risk his credit with Tiberius by a proposal so apparently audacious, resisted for some time her entreaties; but at length the dread of her violence, and the irksome-
ness

ness of her importunities, prevailed; and as the etiquette of the court did not permit him to speak upon any subject which had not been introduced by the emperor, he was obliged to make the request in writing. His letter, which was in the form of a memorial, exhibits such an excellent pattern of courtly hypocrisy, deceit, and falsehood, as creates a pity for those who by an elevated situation are thus exposed to the arts of fraud and flattery.

He begins by assuring Tiberius, “ that the favours he had received so much engrossed his faculties, that he was now accustomed, instead of supplicating the gods, to offer up his prayers to the prince;” a confession which deserves some credit, on account of its honesty! What immediately follows is of a more common complexion. “ *He* never was ambitious of rank or splendour. To watch day and night, like a common centinel, over the life of his sovereign, was the only honour he had ever sought.

fought : and yet a mark of the highest distinction had been conferred upon him. The emperor had deemed him not unworthy an alliance with the imperial house. His present hopes were built on that foundation : and as Augustus had once thoughts of giving his daughter to a Roman knight, he presumed to offer his humble request, that if a new match was designed for Livilla, Tiberius would graciously think of a friend, who would bear in mind a due sense of the favour conferred upon him. To shelter his family from the animosity of Agrippina, was the object he had in view. He felt for the danger to which his children were exposed through her resentment ; but as for himself, if he died in the service of his prince, he should die content, and full of years.”*

To this memorial Tiberius did not think fit to grant an immediate answer ; but as he testified no displeasure at the contents,

* Tacitus.

Sejanus

Sejanus and Livilla put that construction upon his silence which was most consonant to their wishes.

At length the emperor thought fit to explain his sentiments, and in his comments on the letter of Sejanus gave such a proof of penetration, as tends to increase our amazement, that he who could so easily detect dissimulation, should be so deficient in wisdom as to practise it.

As to Agrippina he very justly observes, “ that (taking her resentments against Sejanus for granted) they must be augmented, if by his marriage with Livilla she saw the imperial family divided into factions. Even at present,” he said, “ female jealousies made a scene of tumult and distraction. The sons of Germanicus were involved in these disputes. Should the marriage be allowed, what but perpetual discord would be the consequence?”

Of Livilla’s preference for Sejanus, Tiberius seems not to have entertained the most distant

distant idea. He on the contrary ridicules his minister for imagining, that she, the widow of Caius Cæsar, and of Drusus, would stoop to receive the hand of a Roman knight; or if she married him, that she would remain faithful to a man so greatly her inferior. Nor did he spare the boasted humility of Sejanus, nor fail to remind him of the envy which his elevation had excited, and of the danger to which his too aspiring views might lead. At last, as if it had been impossible for him to proceed in the plain path to sincerity, he concludes with oblique hints of some still dearer tie, in which he wishes to bind Sejanus to himself—as there was no honour to which he was not entitled by his virtues, and by his zeal!”

It is possible that Sejanus was by no means inconsolable on account of the disappointment of his hopes, so far as they concerned his union with a woman, of whose society he had probably long been fatiated:

fatiated: but the mortification thus given to his ambition was extremely severe. It was augmented by the apprehensions which the hints contained in the answer of Tiberius were calculated to inspire. The court that was paid him by the great, his crowded levees, the frequency and magnificence of his entertainments, had evidently not escaped the notice of the emperor, and had possibly produced in his breast a jealousy which might have fatal consequences.

To these considerations were added others no less urgent, which naturally arose from the consciousness of guilt. While Tiberius remained at Rome, there was still a possibility of detection. The friends of Agrippina were numerous and watchful, and would not fail to counteract his designs against her family, by exposing them to the notice of the emperor, who, should he once suspect his selfish motives and ambitious views, would without remorse consign him to destruction. The only hope of
security

security in which he could put any confidence, was in the misanthropical disposition of his master, which he flattered himself he might with little address be able to turn to his own advantage.

To assuage the constant irritation of a mind at war with itself, was the task that had been imposed upon Sejanus by his situation; but like an interested empiric he had, in the medicines he employed, consulted the momentary gratification of his patient, and did not scruple to increase the malady while he satisfied the cravings of disease. To gratify the jealousy that had been excited against Agrippina, Caius Silius and his wife had been sacrificed; but the cruelty and injustice of this transaction, far from allaying the ferment of the passions in which they had originated, augmented their fury. The consciousness of the judgment that would be passed upon his conduct in the minds of the thinking and impartial, increased his hatred of the human race;
and

and that the desire of revenge might not be ungratified, a variety of prosecutions were instituted against individuals of illustrious rank and unblemished reputation. Of these, some by a voluntary death escaped condemnation, and others passed into exile. The implements of tyranny were multiplied; and so great was the encouragement given to informers, that a villain of the name of Vibius Serenus came forward, under the protection of the emperor, as the accuser of his own father!

Far from shedding a beam of consolation on Tiberius, these deeds of horror increased the darkness of his troubled spirit. The creatures of Sejanus were obliged to exert their alacrity in order to discover crimes of a new species; and as prosecutions for words confidentially uttered in the freedom of conversation had become too common to have any novelty, the writings of men of genius were to be ransacked by informers for matter of accusation.

Cremutius

Cremutius Cordus, who had lately published a series of annals held in high estimation by the learned, had incurred the hatred of Sejanus by the severity of his remarks upon some parts of his conduct; and as the character of Cordus gave weight to sarcasms which were pointed by wit, and thrown with the force of truth, he could not possibly be forgiven. His history, which had been read and approved of by Augustus, was in every one's hands; and little did the unconscious author dream, that the work from which he had hitherto derived so much honour and renown, was to be converted into the instrument of his destruction.

Cordus, who wrote for posterity, had exerted the privilege of an historian in speaking with truth and freedom of the characters of the preceding age. Encouraged by the example of Livius, whose eloquent encomiums on the enemies of Augustus had attracted the admiration,
but

but never excited the enmity of that lettered prince, he had indulged the feelings inspired by respect for the ancient constitution of his country, in portraying the characters of its friends ; and had stiled Brutus and Cassius *the last of the Romans*. For this sentiment, a prosecution, directed by Sejanus, was now commenced against the honest historian before the emperor and the senate, on the law of violated majesty—a law so perfectly accommodating, as to fit every species of offence.

Cordus undertook his own defence ; but though among the senators he could not fail to have many intimate friends, and a still greater number of well-wishers, he no sooner cast his eyes on the stern countenance of Tiberius, than he beheld his doom. He well knew that against the determined will of the emperor none would dare to rise ; that society was now too corrupt to pay regard to truth ; and that it is only where the love of justice is so powerful

erful as to outweigh the paltry fears of coward selfishness, that innocence can hope to be vindicated in the teeth of authority.

These considerations did not dismay the dauntless spirit of the historian, or prevent him from pleading his cause with as much firmness as if he had been supported by the hope of success. After examining the precedents of former times, and drawing a happy contrast between the generous conduct of Augustus, in protecting and encouraging literature, and the meanness of Tiberius in manifesting jealousy towards it, he thus proceeds:—"From Greece I draw no precedents; in that country not only liberty but even licentiousness was encouraged. He who felt the edge of satire, knew how to retaliate; words were revenged by words. When public characters have passed away from the stage of life, and the applause of friendship as well as the malice of enemies is heard no more,

it has ever been the prerogative of history to rejudge their actions. Brutus and Cassius are not now at the head of armies; they are not encamped on the plains of Philippi. Can I assist their cause? Have I harangued the people, or incited them to take up arms? It is now more than sixty years since those two extraordinary men perished by the sword: from that time they have been seen in their busts and statues; those remains the very conqueror spared, and history has been just to their memory. *Posterity allows to every man his true value and his proper honours.* You may, if you will, by your judgment affect my life; but Brutus and Cassius will be still remembered, and my name will attend their triumph."

While Cordus spoke, the scowl of displeasure sat upon the dark brow of Tiberius, and aggravated every gloomy feature of his savage countenance. Too wise not to feel the truths that were uttered, and too ungenerous not to hate the man who

had courage to pronounce them, he would have rejoiced in the certainty of having driven this champion for liberty of sentiment to the necessity of laying violent hands upon his life, had he not perceived that fame was dearer to him than existence. From the intrepidity of his mein, and the indignant air with which he withdrew from the senate, Tiberius saw that Cordus had made up his mind to die, in the consciousness that his reputation would survive him; and this idea added the pang of envy to the other torments of the tyrant's breast. Nor could even the knowledge of the painful death chosen by the man he had persecuted, afford him consolation, since he heard at the same time of his sufferings, and of the constancy with which he had endured them.*

In vain did judgment whisper to Tiberius, that by persecuting the author, he had enhanced the value of his work, and

* Note D.

by giving a greater publicity to his sentiments, had induced a stricter examination of their truth; the voice of passion spoke louder than that of reason, and though conscious of the futility of the sentence, he prevailed upon the fathers to ordain that the annals of Cremutius Cordus should be committed to the flames. The book was accordingly burned by the ædiles, and all the copies in the possession of individuals ordered to be destroyed.

While many through fear, and many from the servile spirit of adulation, complied with the requisition, Marcia, the daughter of the historian, inspired by a filial regard for the memory of her father, at the risque of her life, preserved his work from destruction. The copies which she had dexterously contrived to secrete, were afterwards produced and multiplied; and succeeding tyrants might from this example have learned the truth of the observation of Tacitus, that “by proscribing talents, they recorded their own disgrace,

and gave the writer a passport to immortality.”

We cannot imagine that Agrippina could remain an unmoved spectator of events so interesting. Embued from her earliest years with a respect for literature, and an admiration of the genius which adorned its various walks, a man so celebrated as Cremutius Cordus could not have escaped her notice; nor could the congeniality of their sentiments fail to produce a mutual esteem. That taste for the conversation of persons of talents, which in the life-time of Germanicus she had so much improved, and so fully indulged, was still to Agrippina a primary source of enjoyment. Her table was the resort of the wise and the learned; and as liberality of sentiment is the offspring of knowledge and genius, those who were most friendly to literature were generally found to be the warmest friends of freedom. The attack upon Cordus was beheld by persons of this description

description with all the indignation which meanness can produce in the minds of the generous. But when it proceeded to a trial, and the unfortunate author fell a victim to that liberality of opinion which had hitherto distinguished the writings of every Roman who had any pretensions to genius, it was felt that the wound given to liberty was without hope of cure.

The prejudices in favour of the ancient form of government were still so strong, as to create a veneration for the name of liberty in numbers who were in practice the most servile slaves. Such persons might be warmed to enthusiasm in speaking on the favourite topic, without being conscious of inconsistency; and Agrippina, whose feelings were too ardent to permit her strictly to examine how far the sentiments of those who pleased her corresponded with their actions, was thus frequently led to give her opinion upon the conduct of Tiberius with unguarded freedom, where
prudence

prudence would have been silent. Nothing that she said was lost. Every sentiment she uttered, every opinion which she gave upon the occurrences of the day, were carried to and treasured up by Sejanus, to be produced to the emperor at such seasons as when, from the previous irritation of his mind, they were likely to make the deepest impression.

In his endeavours to exasperate the mind of Tiberius, Sejanus, besides the projected ruin of Agrippina, had another favourite object in view. He hoped that by a sense of misery Tiberius would be driven from Rome to seek in solitude that peace, which the guilty bosom is doomed for ever to seek in vain. Every event which occurred increased his hopes of success; for from every event Tiberius felt an accession to the pangs of discontent. Prosecutions were multiplied, but every successive act of tyranny, instead of allaying, increased the vindictive passions which it had been intended

tended to gratify. He knew in every act of oppression his conduct must be condemned; yet could not bear to hear that it was so; without feeling all the fury of resentment. Sejanus sedulously watched for these moments, to contrast the cares and chagrins of government with the pleasures of rural solitude; where, free from all the little anxieties that destroyed the relish of enjoyment, he who was master of the world might taste all the gratifications it could yield. Tiberius listened to these insinuations with apparent satisfaction, but had not at present made up his mind to quitting the busy sphere of business. His revenge had not yet been fatiated.

Agrippina lived respected and beloved. Her friends were still numerous; nor had the death of Silius, and the ruin of his family, been sufficient to warn them of the danger of evincing an attachment to her interests. Another example was still necessary. Silius and Sofia had only been connected

connected with her in the ties of friendship; the next victim should be not only dear to her affection, but near to her in blood. By such a stroke her haughty spirit would be humbled, and she would perceive that it was not her being the descendant of Augustus, which could protect her from the vengeance due to pride and insolence.

The intentions of Tiberius were no sooner communicated to his minister, than that worthy favourite gave a new proof of his zeal in the ardour with which he entered into the plan; while he secretly determined that the destruction of Agrippina's friend should be a prelude to her own. By his diligence a proper instrument was soon discovered for their purpose. A profligate orator who had lately filled the office of prætor, but who now out of employment was likely to fall into that neglect which he dreaded more than infamy, was base enough to prostitute his name and talents

in

in the support of a charge which he knew to be as false as it was wicked.

When the fabrication was prepared, and had received the approbation of his employers, this man stood forth in the senate, and with all due formality accused Claudia Pulchra, the cousin of Agrippina, with a design to poison the emperor, and with the secret practice of spells and incantations. To these charges which came within the construction of violated majesty, that of adultery was added; which, though no better founded than the others, had this advantage, that it afforded Sejanus an opportunity of gratifying his malice against Furnius, the person named as her seducer.

The widow of Varus heard with astonishment of the danger in which she was involved. Twenty-seven years had elapsed since the husband of her youth had perished by the hands of the barbarians, leaving to her tenderness the protection of their infant son,

who had since then been her chief pride and consolation. Next to her son, the person who held the dearest place in her affections was Agrippina. Their near affinity had given them a common interest in all the misfortunes of their race; the feelings which it might on such occasions have been imprudent or unsafe to communicate to friends less interested, they could freely pour into each other's bosom; so that the bonds of amity had been knit by long and mutual confidence. Age and early misfortunes had given to Claudia so much prudence and moderation, as enhanced the value of her friendship to her more impetuous cousin; who on her part had wisdom to perceive, and candour to acknowledge, the inestimable advantage of having such a monitor.

Claudia instantly perceived, that though *she* received the blow, the wound was meant for Agrippina. Conscious that she was known to be innocent by her accusers,

cusers, and would not be believed guilty even by the judges who were about to condemn her, she appears not to have made any attempt to vindicate herself, or to rouse her friends in her defence. But while Claudia in calm despair resigned herself to fate, Agrippina, fired with indignation, and losing in her fears for her friend all regard to her own safety, obeyed the immediate impulse of her feelings. She flew to the palace, and not there finding Tiberius, rushed to the place of sacrifice; where he was then employed in offering a victim to the manes of Augustus.

Breathless, agitated, yet still in the midst of agitation preserving dignity, she accosted him in a tone of remonstrance and reproach. "How inconsistent," cried she, "is the piety, that while it slays victims to the memory of Augustus, persecutes his posterity! What are these senseless statues that you adore? Are they animated with the spirit of Augustus? No. His
descendants

descendants are the only true and living images; yet they—they whose veins are warm with his celestial blood—stand trembling on the brink of ruin! Why is Claudia Pulchra devoted to destruction? What crime has she committed? She has loved Agrippina! alas, too fondly loved her! That is her only crime. Improvident woman! she might have remembered Sofia undone and ruined for no other reason!”*

Stung by reproaches, which were at once so keen and so deserved, Tiberius darted on Agrippina a look fully expressive of his malice and resentment. After a moment's pause he took her hand, and with an ironical sneer, infinitely more insulting than the vehemence of rage, repeated a quotation from a Greek poet to this effect: “My dear child, do you think yourself injured, because you do not reign?”† Then turning his back upon the princess, walked sullenly away. She

* Tacitus.

† Suetonius.

too plainly saw that there was for Claudia now no hope : and the cruel certainty that affection for her was the sole cause of her friend's calamity, pierced her to the quick.

Her sufferings were not in this instance augmented by suspense, for so rapidly was the prosecution of Claudia urged on, that her sentence was almost immediately pronounced. Whether by that sentence she was condemned to death or banishment, does not very clearly appear. She was in either way equally lost to Agrippina.

While any possibility remained of saving her friend, Agrippina's spirits had been supported by exertion ; they now sunk into the torpor of despair. A severe fit of illness, brought on by grief and agitation, threatened her life ; but her constitution, which had never been enfeebled by luxury, resisted the attack, and she slowly recovered to taste of future ills. While still weakened by sickness, she received a visit of condolence from the emperor. At the
sight

sight of him, the recollection of Claudia's sufferings rushed upon her heart: her voice failed: the powers of speech were lost: she remained fixed in silence, while floods of tears streamed from her eyes.

Tiberius, who could be at no loss to guess the cause of these sorrows, appeared not to regard them. He at length, however, made some observation, which, by piquing her resentment, gave a new impulse to her feelings. She spoke, but though it was in the tone of supplication, every word she uttered, conveyed to Tiberius the keenness of reproach. She complained of being forlorn and unprotected: said, "that as a widow she was destitute of all interest; and that for a woman of honour surrounded by enemies there was no resource, but in the conjugal state. The season of her youth (she remarked) was not entirely passed; and there were at Rome citizens of illustrious rank, who would with pride take the widow and children

children of Germanicus under their protection.”*

This proposal implied the severest reproof to Tiberius, on whom, according to the laws and customs of Rome, the protection of Agrippina and her children had on the death of Germanicus devolved. Her character was too far removed from every suspicion of levity to render her motives doubtful. She felt that the place which was due to her as the descendant of Augustus, she was not permitted to fill. But that her pretensions were such as if united to any powerful family in the state would be sufficiently formidable. In holding out this threat, it is probable that Agrippina was influenced by no other motive than that of gratifying her present feelings, by what she knew would be unpleasing to those of Tiberius. It was soothing to her pride to have it thus in her power to vex him, and she eagerly seized

the opportunity, totally forgetful of what might be the consequences. The emperor, who was a better dissembler, pretended to listen with calm indifference, and made no reply to her remonstrance; which however did not fail to increase his jealousy of her ambitious views, and to add fuel to his former hatred. He left her without any apparent displeasure; but for that reason she might have known that rage was rankling in his heart.

CHAPTER V.

JULIA, (*the Wife of NERO*) *her Treachery.*

—AGRIPPINA'S *Interview with AGER*;
her Behaviour at the Table of TIBERIUS.

—*The Emperor's Departure from Rome*;
his Life saved by SEJANUS; *his Jealousy of*
NERO; *consequent Unhappiness of AGRIP-*
PINA.—*Generous Conduct of TITIUS SA-*
BINUS.

A. D. 25—27.

THE power of Tiberius was now so firmly established, that nothing but the coward fears of conscience could have made him entertain a moment's apprehension concerning the possibility of its being ever disputed. What was still preserved of the forms of the ancient constitution only served to strengthen his authority.

To

To his decrees the senate lent its name; and that assembly which had formerly given laws to the world, was now content to be occupied with the humbler task of listening to the evidence of spies and informers. The fountains of honour and of destruction were equally at his command. The laws had no other interpreter than his will, which was not only obeyed without demur, but anticipated by all the obsequiousness of flattery.

Tiberius, jealous as he was of opposition, could perceive the difference between the abject submission of fear, and the willing obedience of affection. He knew not what it was to be saluted by the joyful acclamations of a free and happy people, hailing in their sovereign the guardian of their rights, and the palladium of constitutional liberty! He hated flattery; yet still more deeply hated that gloomy silence which told him how unpopular his actions were. When he contrasted the heartfelt attach-

ment

ment shewn to Agrippina by her friends, with the constraint and dissimulation which all who approached him seemed to labour under; when he remembered how Germanicus was loved, and how dear his children still were to the people; it was not the apparent submission of all ranks of men to his authority, that could speak peace to his heart. Tiberius had too much penetration to believe it to be in the power of Agrippina and her children to overthrow his government, or to do him any personal injury; his terrors and alarms were therefore only feigned, and made use of as a cloak to conceal his malignity. By men of discernment, the real cause of his antipathy was found in the popularity which still attended the family of Germanicus.

Sejanus, by whose care the seeds of jealousy which he had so carefully sown were most assiduously cultivated, took every means to facilitate their growth. The peculiar affection manifested by Agrippina
towards

towards her eldest son, afforded him an opportunity of implicating him with his mother in all her pretended offences. The mild and amiable manners of this deserving young man were represented to Tiberius as the specious artifices of refined hypocrisy: his virtues were converted into crimes; and the filial affection with which he returned the partiality of a fond parent, construed into a certain proof of a cherished hatred to the emperor.

Little did Agrippina imagine, while in the fulness of her heart she poured its sorrows into the bosom of this darling son, that she was assisting Sejanus in laying a train for his destruction. But Nero, though he possessed not the energy of her character, had all its sincerity and openness. Fond of his young wife, and relying with unsuspecting confidence on her prudence and fidelity, he concealed not from her any of the sentiments or feelings of his heart. Of this confidence Julia was, alas! unworthy.

Never

Never having imbibed those sentiments of honour, which would have made her shrink with horror from betraying a trust so sacred, she thought there could be no harm in repeating to her mother what she had heard from her husband. The vanity of shewing how far she had been trusted; had probably its share in the treachery. But as it has happened in a thousand other instances, what was begun in levity ended in guilt; and she who had at first betrayed the confidence reposed in her, with no other view than to gratify an idle vanity, was led by degrees to be accessory to her husband's ruin.

Opportunities of complaining of the severity of a government which delighted in blood, were never wanting; nor was the private life of Tiberius such as to escape the severity of censure. Uniting in himself the vices of every opposite character, he was not more remarkable for the gloomy unsociableness of his temper, than for the grossness of licentiousness. The unrelenting

ing austerity with which he condemned the failings of others, would in a person of unblemished manners have been revered as proceeding from a zeal for virtue; but in him it was regarded as the ebullition of a tyrant's spleen, who could not bear that any but himself should enjoy the privilege of being vicious. Notwithstanding the veil of decency which he had as yet endeavoured to throw over his conduct, and which he had no doubt concealed it from the world, his profligacy did not pass undetected; and the knowledge of this circumstance was only wanting to complete his aversion to Rome, and to fix his determination of leaving it for ever. The discovery was at length made, and in a manner sufficiently mortifying.

Presiding, as was usual, in the senate, Tiberius had one day the satisfaction of seeing a military officer stand forward as the accuser of Montanus, a man celebrated for wit and talents, and on that account particularly

particularly obnoxious to him who dreaded the one as much as he envied the other.

The wretch, who, forgetting the honour of a soldier, had stooped to exercise the infamous profession of a spy, accused the unfortunate wit of having spoken words injurious to the emperor. As he was the principal witness, he resolved to spare no pains in establishing the charge; and therefore went into the most circumstantial and minute detail of all that had been said at the convivial meeting, when the words alleged against Montanus had been spoken.

Tiberius, who had at first listened to the informer with savage pleasure, was transformed to fury, when he heard how freely the actions of his public and of his private life were canvassed by those who, in his pride, he had imagined too much intimidated by his greatness, to dare pronounce his name but with the reverence due to the divinities they adored. The senators observing the agitation of Tiberius,

rius, and dreading the effects of his wrath, endeavoured to drown the voice of the witness by making so much noise as they hoped might prevent him from being heard, but in vain; the soldier's voice was strong and powerful, and the more they coughed and groaned, the more effectually did he exert its strength.

The ears of Tiberius were grated by the repetition of censures, which were not the less disagreeable from his consciousness of their truth. He heard with indignation that the rigour of prosecutions was imputed not to justice, but to revenge; and that his cruelties had already rendered him odious. He did not, however, lose all command of temper, till the informer began to relate the sarcasms thrown upon certain transactions of his private life, which he had believed to be unknown to the world. In a transport of rage he then called out, that "he would refute the calumny; that he would instantly institute
a pro-

a prosecution against its authors; that they should know what it was to dare to asperse his character; for that none should with impunity provoke his vengeance."

His friends, who crowded round him, endeavoured, by representing the meanness of the offenders, to assuage his wrath; but the recollection of his own dignity contributed more effectually to restore him to apparent tranquillity. The calm was only apparent, for the storm of passion continued to boil within his breast, and demanded new victims to appease its fury. The condemnation of Montanus, which the obsequious fathers immediately pronounced, was followed by other acts of cruelty and oppression; and the certainty of having been blamed for want of clemency, instead of mitigating his rigour, only served in the mind of Tiberius as a motive for increasing its severity.

Had Tiberius properly employed those powers of reflection which he eminently possessed,

possessed, he would have been made sensible that such a change of conduct as would have converted the fear and hatred of the world into sentiments of esteem and approbation, would have been the surest means of restoring him to happiness. But pride scorned the monitions of conscience; pride, which had instigated him to the indulgence of self-will, and fostered the growth of every evil passion, forbade the acknowledgment of error, and urged him to pursue the same career in which he had hitherto found nothing but misery. Eager to lose the sense of wretchedness, yet neglectful of the only means by which it could with certainty be accomplished, he seized on the idea of retirement which had been suggested by Sejanus; and fancied that in the luxurious shades of some sequestered scene, he might in the pleasures of voluptuousness attain that felicity, which the exercise of unbounded power had failed to impart. As a prelude to this step, he

caused

caused his intention of going into Campania, in order to dedicate two temples, one to Jupiter, and another to Augustus, to be rumoured abroad; and in the mean time occupied himself in making preparations for his departure.

Agrippina, who was still overwhelmed with melancholy for the loss of her friend, slowly recovered from the severe fit of illness which had been occasioned by her grief. On her appearance abroad after that event, one of the first persons she met was Domitius Afer, the orator, whom we have already seen so infamously employing his eloquence in the prosecution of Claudia Pulchra. The part he had taken in that transaction, tho' it had thrown an indelible stain upon the integrity of his principles, had afforded an opportunity for the display of his talents; and the flame of his eloquence gained him that applause which was denied to his virtue. Afer was not, however, as yet sufficiently hardened, to be des-

titute

rute of all shame: the sight of Agrippina threw him into confusion: he suddenly turned aside to avoid her piercing glance, and concealing his face in his robe, hoped to pass unnoticed. Agrippina stopped; and calling to the orator in a gentle voice, asked him why he thus shunned her? Afer, confused and hesitating, knew not what reply to make; and pitying his embarrassment, Agrippina in a softened tone repeated in Greek a verse from Homer, which with admirable quickness she adapted to the occasion:

“Not thou—’tis Agamemnon is the cause

“Of all those ills to me;”*

said Agrippina, holding out her hand as a token of amity to the self-condemned Afer. Struck with the aptness of the quotation, while he felt the full force and delicacy of the allusion it conveyed, Afer, who had expected from Agrippina only the bitterness of deserved reproach, was over-

* Note F.

whelmed

whelmed with astonishment and admiration. The loquacity of the pleader was no more: he stood fixed in silence, following the princess with his eyes as long as she remained in sight, and then, full of what had passed, he flew to communicate the circumstances of Agrippina's conduct to his friends; without reflecting, that as Agrippina, in kindly endeavouring to reconcile him to himself, had thrown the odium on Tiberius, he, by repeating what had passed, exposed her to the tyrant's resentment.

It is not to be supposed that Tiberius would remain long in ignorance of whatever could tend to exasperate him against Agrippina; but it was only when thrown off his guard by some sudden impulse of passion, that the impression made upon him by the calumnies which were reported, could be ascertained. In his jealous mind it was possible that suspicions might at some time arise of their truth; and should he once detect in any of the stories that were brought

brought him, an appearance of falshood, all the pains that had been taken to irritate him against her, might be seen through and refented.

To prevent as much as possible the occurrence of such dangerous suspicions, it was deemed advisable that Tiberius should have some ocular proof of the malignant nature of Agrippina's sentiments with regard to him; and as there was no crime more unpardonable in the tyrant's eyes than that of harbouring a suspicion of his evil intentions, it was resolved between Sejanus and Livilla that Agrippina should be drawn into this snare. An opportunity soon offered of putting into execution the admirable plot which had thus been laid.

One day while Agrippina was at her toilet, preparing for dining at the palace on special invitation, an anonymous billet was conveyed to her by one of those female attendants who was in the pay of Livilla, intimating the necessity of the utmost cau-
tion

tion in regard to what she ate or drank at the table of Tiberius, as it was known that she had been invited with the most treacherous intention. The hints she had already received to the same purpose now rushed upon her recollection, and so strongly impressed her imagination, that she at first resolved to ensure her safety by absenting herself from the entertainment. She was however diverted from her purpose by the representations of such of her people as she admitted into her confidence, who suggested to her the ease with which she could avoid tasting of any thing of which the emperor did not himself partake. Her spirit which disdained the appearance of cowardice seconded this advice; and with a mind tainted with terror, and deeply impressed with horror and resentment, she went to the palace at the appointed hour.*

* Three o'clock in the afternoon was at that time the supper-hour of the Romans; as they took no regular dinner, it was the principal meal, and sometimes prolonged to a late hour.

Tiberius had a few days previous to this received a hint from Sejanus of the unworthy suspicions which had, as he said, since the loss of Claudia haunted Agrippina's mind, and he resolved to watch her conduct with the strictest attention. When she entered, the air of melancholy which was visible in her countenance, indicated her having come an unwilling guest; her cheerfulness was constrained, and all her smiles were forced. With the respect due to her rank, Tiberius led her to the table, which was square, and three parts surrounded, according to the manners of the times, with as many sophas. Each sofa was large enough for three to recline upon with ease, their limbs stretched at full length, and the head supported by the left arm: the right was at liberty to be employed in carrying the meat, which had already been carved by the carver, to their mouths. The middle place upon the side-sopha was the place of honour, and as such appropriated

priated to Agrippina by Tiberius, who occupied the place immediately above on the same couch.

The first course which was brought in altogether upon a frame in which the dishes were fixed, consisted, as was usual, of varieties of fish dressed with rich sauces, wild and tame fowl, kid, venison, &c. Agrippina, pensive and full of thought, was too much agitated by her own reflections to be able to eat of what was so plentifully set before her. Could she have adhered to her resolution of partaking of what she saw the emperor devouring with greediness, she might have escaped observation. But she had not sufficient self-command to act with that degree of policy. Her merely declining to eat might have been attributed to indisposition, had not her reserve and silence given such an appearance of fullness to her conduct, as did not escape the penetrating eye of Tiberius. He took no notice of it till the second course was put upon the
table,

table, when he resolved to put her to the test. After having praised the appearance of some preserved apples which were placed opposite to him, he, with his own hand, helped Agrippina from the dish, of which no one had as yet tasted.

Affured that this was the fatal viand of which the friendly monitor had bidden her beware, Agrippina instantly took alarm. She changed colour, and with a look expressive of horror gave her plate to the attendant who stood behind, that it might immediately be conveyed from her sight. Tiberius penetrated into her secret thoughts; but always master of himself, he appeared not to take any notice of her extraordinary behaviour, and continued to converse with his other guests upon the topics of the day, as if nothing had happened to ruffle or discompose his mind. Deeply, however, did the suspicions of Agrippina sink into his vindictive soul. Instead of finding in his own unrelenting severity an
excuse

excuse for her fears, he sought in her apprehensions an apology for whatever cruelty and vengeance could inflict. On his last interview with his mother previous to his leaving Rome, he related the circumstance, adding, "should this woman be treated with severity, will any body wonder, when she now imputes to me the guilt of dealing in poison?"* an expression implying a threat which did not pass unnoticed. It was heard by the friends of Agrippina as a prognostic of her ruin, and when it reached her own ears, confirmed the apprehensions she had long entertained concerning the dangers of her situation. In such circumstances, the idea of the emperor's leaving Rome was some relief to her spirits. She rejoiced to learn that the day of his departure was now fixed; and flattered herself that she should in his absence experience a return of tranquillity.

* Tacitus.

In the middle of summer, in the year twenty-six of the Christian æra, (year of Rome 779) Tiberius departed from Rome with a slender retinue. He was accompanied by Sejanus, who had soon an opportunity of endearing himself to his master, by giving such a testimony of zeal, as had it sprung from disinterested motives, would have done honour to his character.

It happened that the heat of the season had one day induced the emperor and some friends whom he had invited to a banquet, to choose a grotto formed by nature, for the place of entertainment. While enjoying the delicious coolness of this retreat, they were suddenly alarmed by an unforeseen disaster. Part of the roof gave way, and would inevitably have crushed Tiberius beneath its ruins, had not Sejanus, with equal courage and presence of mind, defended him from the danger, by placing himself in such an attitude as enabled him to sustain the impending weight. The
rest

rest of the guests who had fled at the first alarm, returned with pioneers to clear away the ruins, and to dig out the bodies of the emperor and his minister, whom they imagined to have perished together. To their great astonishment they found Tiberius unhurt, and Sejanus glorying in the wounds he had received in his preservation. This incident at once removed from the mind of Tiberius every doubt concerning the fidelity and attachment of him who had thus endangered his life to save him, and from that moment the power of Sejanus was equally unlimited and uncontrolled.

That the joy which Sejanus testified on his master's escape was unfeigned, will readily be believed, when we consider that had he then been doomed to perish, nothing could have prevented Nero from succeeding to the imperial dignity. He had, since the death of his uncle Drusus, been acknowledged and treated as heir-apparent by the emperor, the senate, and the people: as
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the son of Germanicus, he was particularly dear to the military; nor could all the arts of Sejanus have prevented them from defending his claim against that of any other competitor.

No sooner did an account of the accident which had so nearly proved fatal to the emperor reach Rome, than those who till then had never looked beyond the reigning power, began to make such reflections on the precarious tenure of human life, as led them to think it prudent to secure an interest in the favour of the successor. Numbers with this view now paid their court to the young prince. His vanity was gratified by flattery, and his ambition roused by the alluring prospects which were placed before him. His freedmen and other dependents, who hoped through him to rise to power and influence, were impatient of delay, and endeavoured to stimulate him to act with spirit, in asserting his right to that authority which the superannuated

annuated emperor had weakly permitted a favourite minister to usurp. It was, they said, beneath the son of Germanicus to yield his place in the empire to an upstart, who, conscious of his meanness, would, as soon as he saw himself opposed with firmness by the prince, shrink into primeval obscurity.

Nero, modest and unassuming as he naturally was, found his pride piqued by these remonstrances. Unhackneyed in the ways of men, he considered expressions of zeal for his interest as certain proofs of friendship; and in order to convince these ardent friends that the facility with which he had yielded to the will of Tiberius, did not proceed from want of spirit, he began openly to blame his conduct with a freedom in which he had never hitherto indulged. No word escaped the spies of Sejanus: he had notice of all that passed; and like a sportsman who rejoices to see the unsuspecting bird hasten-

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ing to the snare, he exulted in the success of his insidious arts.

While Tiberius was in Campania, he was frequently visited by the young princes and other relations of the imperial family, and already began, by his reception of Nero, to indicate the resentment with which the reports of Sejanus had inspired him. The unhappy young man complained to his wife of the change in his uncle's manners, which, though always cold, had never before been so stern and severe. He asked, if she did not observe that upon some occasions his harsh features in regarding him were relaxed into a malicious smile? What could be the meaning of this? Surely he had never been guilty of a single action that could be construed into offence? Yet it was against him and him alone that he appeared to be irritated, his brother was received as usual.

The unworthy Julia, having received her instructions from her mother, caught
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at the opportunity of exciting her husband's jealousy of a brother, whose turbulent and aspiring temper had from their boyish days been to him a source of uneasiness. Having by her hints awakened his resentment against Drusus, she flew to Livia with an account of all that had passed.

Sejanus, who, in hopes of profiting by a breach between the brothers, had endeavoured to insinuate himself into the favour of Drusus, took occasion, by seemingly inadvertent hints, to awaken his ambition, and to represent to him the possibility that Tiberius might avenge the injustice that had been done him by his mother's partiality for her elder son.

Drusus had always been jealous of his mother's affection towards his more deserving brother, but did not till now imagine that it had been manifest to others. His pride was alarmed by the discovery; the coldness now assumed by Nero inflamed his resentment; and in the impetuosity of passion

sion he was tempered into a fit instrument to serve the purpose of his deadliest foe.

Agrippina observed with pain the dissensions of her children, and as the resentments of the mild and gentle never fail to make a deeper impression upon others than those of the impetuous and vindictive, she was inclined to believe that the fault lay in Drusus, and that he only was to blame. Irritated by his having commenced a friendship with the mortal enemy of his family, and offended by his want of respect to herself, as well as by his insolence to his elder brother, she expressed her displeasure in terms that were rather calculated to exasperate than to soothe a proud and angry spirit. She thus widened the breach which prudence should have taught her to heal; and by persevering in that unjust partiality towards her favourite, which had sown the seeds of jealousy in the breast of a child who ought to have been equally dear to her affection, she contributed to the ruin of both.

About

About this time a scene of public distress occurred, which in breasts capable of sympathy superseded the consideration of every trivial anxiety. By the accidental fall of an amphitheatre, erected in the neighbourhood of Rome by a man whose vanity far exceeded his wealth, twenty thousand people were in an instant crushed to death. Thirty thousand more were maimed or mutilated, and presented a spectacle of wretchedness, such as in the annals of misery has been rarely equalled. Those feelings of humanity which the great Creator has implanted in every heart, but which pride, and the depraved passions which it fosters, continually tend to counteract, were by the magnitude of this calamity forced to assert their influence in the breast. Persons of the highest rank, giving way to the impulse of compassion, opened their doors to receive the unhappy sufferers: they bound up their wounds; they distributed medicines for their relief; and

and forgetting for a moment the difference of rank, felt for the poor as for their fellow-creatures.

But for this sudden exertion of benevolence thousands of the wounded must inevitably have perished; for never had Roman charity instituted an hospital for the wounded or diseased, or reared a place of shelter for houseless poverty. The noisy beggar might indeed extort from the passenger an unwilling alms, and the obsequious client obtain from the proud patron a scanty supply of provisions for the day; but to visit the sick and the forlorn in the habitations of wretchedness, to seek out the destitute in order to afford relief, and to cheer by sympathy those children of sorrow whose wounds no other cordial could cure, were duties which it never entered into the mind of Roman philosopher to teach, or of Roman philanthropist to practise!

Upon occasions such as that we have been mentioning, when the appeal to the feelings

feelings was too powerful to be resisted, we may observe the casual display of sympathetic benevolence; but like the transient flame of the meteor, it was soon lost in the darkness from which it emanated. While unfixed by principle, its operations were neither lasting nor diffusive. If it sometimes impelled to relieve the object whose misery pressed upon the senses, the impulse expired with the occasion that had produced it.

Nature had bestowed upon Agrippina too warm a heart to permit her to be an indifferent spectator of a scene so fraught with misery as that which Rome now exhibited. In exerting herself to mitigate the sorrows of others, she would unavoidably lighten the pressure of her own; and perhaps in this year, which was marked by an unusual degree of calamity to her fellow-citizens, she was more frequently lulled into a forgetfulness of the perils by which she was surrounded, than at any other period.

A fire

A fire, by which the seventh part of Rome was laid in ashes, and many hundred families reduced to ruin, while it gave ample scope to the benevolence of the rich, excited in the populace a spirit of discontent mingled with superstition. The gods they thought had occasioned these disasters, on account of their displeasure at the absence of Tiberius, who, it was evident, had left Rome under an evil constellation. They therefore besought his return, to appease the wrath of the offended deities. The emperor was informed of their murmurs, but without returning to Rome found a method of making friends of the discontented: he wisely ordered a distribution of money equal to the loss of the individuals, and as it was granted without favour or partiality to every sufferer, all ranks united in praise of his munificence.

While all who remained in the capital were occupied by these events, Tiberius, having finished the dedication of the temples

ples which formed the ostensible object of his journey, determined to give himself up to the enjoyment of that happiness which had from a distance allured his hopes.

In Campania he had all the means of happiness that imagination had conceived essential to its completion: but in Campania he was miserable. The cause of this unlooked-for misery he however fancied he had discovered. It was in the numbers of people who came from Rome, from the municipal towns, and from all the province, to pay their respects to the sovereign. Could he find means of keeping off the crowd, who incessantly broke in upon his privacy, he should certainly be happy.

An edict was immediately issued, notifying his desire of retirement, and forbidding any one to approach. The people obeyed; but neither the imperial edict, nor the imperial guards, nor all the power of imperial greatness, could keep off the intrusions of discontent. It like a gnawing worm con-
tinued

tinued to prey upon his bosom; and while he endeavoured, in the polluted stream of sensual indulgence, to forget its pangs, he found that he only exasperated their asperity.

In the vain pursuit of happiness, he in the following spring passed over to the island of Caprea, which at once presented the advantages of a delightful and secure retreat. Twelve magnificent villas, named after so many gods, were erected for his accommodation. The finest vegetable productions sprung spontaneous from the willing soil; and while a barrier of rocks defended this favoured spot from the inclement storms of winter, its exposure to the western breeze gave coolness to the summer's air. Here, in the society of agreeable friends, even melancholy might have learned to smile, and to acknowledge that peace and nature can bring a solace to every sorrow which the malice of fortune can inflict. But to the heart that is under

the dominion of impure or malignant passions, heaven itself would not afford an asylum from wretchedness. Tiberius, still haunted by misery, saw no other way to escape its torments than by plunging into the depths of vice. The agony of remorse followed the career of guilt, and disappointment increased the ferociousness of a temper that was by nature savage. He became every day more cruel and vindictive: and as the consciousness of cruelty begets suspicion of revenge, every gloomy passion of the tyrant's breast was rendered more fierce and malignant by the constant operation of fear and jealousy.

Sejanus beheld in those vicious passions which constituted the misery of Tiberius, the means of gratifying his own insatiable ambition: he therefore did all in his power to excite him to their indulgence; and under the shew of a zeal that was anxious to save him from every trouble, and to guard him from every danger, he
took

took care that no one should be admitted to the emperor's presence, or even to the island, without his special permission. The compleat ascendancy which he had now gained, put it in his power to manage the suspicion and cruelty of his master as he found it most convenient; they were in his hands as mines filled with the materials of destruction, which he could ignite at pleasure, and of which he alone held the train.

The long projected ruin of Agrippina would probably have been the first effort of Sejanus, had not the still existing influence of the emperor's mother rendered it necessary for him to proceed with caution. Of this influence Tiberius had never been able entirely to deprive the widow of Augustus, though he had been at incessant pains to limit it to narrow bounds; and the artful minister was well aware, that age had not yet so far impaired her high spirit, as to render her passive with regard to
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what concerned the interests of the imperial family.

Agrippina, as the only individual descended from Augustus that had escaped her fatal jurisdiction, had ever been the object of her inveterate dislike; nor did the virtues of Germanicus save him from sharing in the same sentiment. Considering him as the rival of Tiberius, she wished his ruin, and rejoiced in his untimely fate; but she did not forget that he was her grandson, nor that it was her blood which flowed in his children's veins. In his eldest son she acknowledged the true representative of the Claudian family, the rightful heir of Tiberius, and the future hope of Rome. These considerations which originated in pride, were probably strengthened by motives of affection.

Nero and Drusus had both been brought up at Rome; she had been accustomed to their society; and as the attentions of the young never fail to be acceptable to
declining

declining age, it is not to be supposed that Livia could at this advanced period behold herself surrounded with her great grandchildren without experiencing an emotion of tenderness.

Sejanus not only knew her sentiments, but knew that with all his art it would be utterly impossible to prevent her from communicating them to Tiberius. Ill as the partiality of Livia had been requited by her darling son, she never relinquished one item of the parental prerogative ; and so deeply riveted are the chains of authority, when they have at an early period been imposed by terror, that Tiberius, though he had treated his mother with ingratitude, with neglect, and even with insolence, still felt her ascendancy, and stood in awe of her displeasure.

These circumstances compelled Sejanus to advance with caution in his great design, though every step he took was with a view to its accomplishment. As a mark of
favour

favour from Tiberius, guards were appointed to attend Agrippina, and a similar honour conferred on Nero, who was by this extraordinary dignity exalted above his brother, and every other citizen. The guards chosen for this service were taken from the prætorian, of which Sejanus had long had the command, and which he had by bribes and promises tutored to his purpose. They were in the present instance intended to act as spies upon the spies which had been already placed near the persons of his devoted victims. The names of all who visited them, or whom they visited, were inserted in a register, and duly transmitted to Caprea, to be made use of in proper time as matter of accusation against the most illustrious citizens. Nor was this sufficient to gratify Sejanus, or to secure the means of exciting the suspicions of his cruel master. The traitors who had been introduced into the families of Agrippina and her son, were directed to record the particulars of every conversation that passed

at their tables, in a diary kept for the purpose, so that no casual expression dropped unnoted from their lips.

Agrippina saw that she was surrounded with perils, but was unconscious of the magnitude of her danger. It was to her son alone that she could communicate her anxieties; and far from receiving any comfort from mutual confidence, it only led to such a knowledge of each other's sufferings, as excited in each a greater degree of solicitude. The mystery in which every thing was enveloped increased their alarm. The friends of Sejanus, or, more properly speaking, those who from interested views pretended attachment to the favourite, affected, whenever they approached Agrippina or the prince, an air of coldness and reserve. The frivolous and the selfish, who are always ready to take the tone from those whom they imagine to be in the road to power, followed their example; but as the recollec-
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tion of the precarious life of the emperor rendered them unwilling to offend his appointed successor, they shewed in their behaviour, as different sentiments predominated, a motley mixture of fervility and restraint.

That Tiberius had ever viewed the family of Germanicus with a jealous eye, was known to all; and as one of the twin sons of Drusus still survived, and the intimacy between Sejanus and Livilla had long been whispered as a court secret that was in every mouth, a rumour of the emperor's intention to leave Sejanus to govern as guardian of the infant prince was easily credited, and greatly strengthened his authority. The prudent foresaw the risk they would run in such circumstances by being known for the friends of Agrippina, and selfishness, under the mask of wisdom, taught them to avoid the danger. She saw herself deserted by many in whom she put confidence, and by many more on whom

whom she had conferred essential obligations. Those who had been most lavish of their flattery, were now the first to forsake her, and to make a merit with Sejanus of their black ingratitude to a prince whose virtues they were compelled to honour.

The pride of Agrippina could not fail to be mortified by these events; but her spirit was too great to be easily subdued. Though deserted by the fickle and the worthless, she was supported by the steady and undeviating friendship of persons of the highest rank and respectability. Of these her brother-in-law Asinius Gallus,* and Titius Sabinus, who had been the companion of Germanicus in all his campaigns, and who continued to her and to her family the friendship he had felt for her husband, deservedly held the first place in her esteem. By his conduct in the senate,

* Who had been married to her half-sister Vipsania Agrippina, first wife to Tiberius.

Gallus had incurred the hatred and commanded the respect of Tiberius, who stood in awe of his talents, and admired his integrity. Sabinus was by birth only one of the first of the Roman knights, but he had commanded armies with honour, and was equally distinguished by bravery in the field, and by all the virtues of the private citizen. Fervently attached to Germanicus, and resolved never to forsake the family of his friend, the honest soldier no sooner observed the defection of the court parasites, than he redoubled his attention. At the table of Agrippina he was a constant guest; and whenever she went into public, the aged general was sure to make one of her attendants; affording an example of fidelity and attachment, always respectable, but in that age very rarely imitated.

CHAPTER VI.

NERO and DRUSUS, the Sons of AGRIPPINA; their Dissensions.—SABINUS, the Friend of AGRIPPINA, betrayed and put to Death.—The younger AGRIPPINA married to DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS.—Death of the Empress LIVIA.

A. D. 28—29.

THE dark clouds which had long been louring over Agrippina's destiny, wore every day a denser aspect; but of all the miseries she experienced, those which sprung from the bosom of her family were, perhaps, the most intolerable. Seldom will it be found that any parent has indulged an impulse of partiality for any favourite child, so as to create a suspicion that one engrosses the affection which is due

due to all, without having ample cause to repent of the apparent injustice. The punishment of Agrippina was, however, uncommonly severe. That too evident preference for her elder son, which excited the jealousy of Drusus, increased the influence of the passions which it had been her aim to check, and rendered him liable to be misled by the flattery of pretended friends. Persuaded that he had no share in his mother's affections, he gloried in avenging the injustice she had done to his superior merit by her partiality for his less-deserving brother. With a view of vexing his unhappy parent, he broke off a match that had been made for him in his childhood with the daughter of Otho,* and married Æmilia Lepida, niece of the lady whose trial and banishment has been formerly noticed. As the marriage was made under the auspices of Sejanus, it could not fail to prove disagreeable to

* Afterwards emperor.

Agrippina, though she was not yet sufficiently acquainted with the character of her daughter-in-law, to be aware of the still more formidable objections which a knowledge of its profligacy would have produced. After this event, Drusus openly arranged himself under the banners of her mortal foe; and such of the family of the *Æmili* as had hitherto adhered to her, now dropped off, and under pretence of following their new ally, paid their court to the same power.

Of all the friends of Germanicus, *Sabinus* alone had the courage to remain constant in his attentions. He saw with indignation the meanness and perfidy of the servile crew, and too sincere to conceal his feelings, did not scruple to upbraid the sycophants who could thus basely desert a princess, whose smiles they had so lately courted, and on whom they had so profusely lavished that incense of flattery which they now offered at the shrine
of

of a pernicious minister. That minister he considered as his country's curse. His machinations against the family of Germanicus he believed to be but a part of a vast system, which included the destruction of all that was eminent in rank or virtue. This opinion, however justly formed, it was extremely unsafe to communicate to any but a person of tried fidelity and of congenial sentiments. Such a friend Sabinus thought he had been happy enough to find in Latiaris, a man of prætorian rank, who paved the way to his heart by the praises of those he loved.

Professing to honour the memory of Germanicus, Latiaris pathetically lamented the critical situation of Agrippina and the young princes, and spoke of the ingratitude they had experienced with a feeling which touched Sabinus to the soul. His heart, which was as tender as it was brave, melted at the description of Agrippina's wrongs. He contrasted the misery of the present with
the

happinefs of former times. He recollected the period, when, fitting by the fide of her beloved husband, ſhe had entered Rome in triumph; when her beauty dazzled every eye, and her ſmiles enchanted every heart; when, wherever ſhe appeared, ſhe was hailed by the voice of adulation, wherever ſhe went ſhe beheld herſelf ſurrounded by admiring crowds, who, while they adored her charms, gloried in her virtue! That virtue was ſtill unblemiſhed, the tongue of calumny had never dared to ſoil its luſtre; but it was remembered that ſhe had been the favourite child of Auguſtus, and the adored wife of the greateſt, beſt of men! “ Yes,” cried Sabinus, while tears forced their way down his time-furrowed cheeks, “ theſe are the crimes of Agrippina! theſe will bring ruin on her devoted head!”

Latiaſis evinced an abundance of ſympathy. He talked with indignation of the cruelty of Sejanus, and led the unſuſpecting Sabinus to open to him with freedom

dom all his sentiments upon the conduct not only of the minister, but of Tiberius. The honest soldier delighted in the company of a man whose opinions he so much approved; and cordial in all his friendships, did not decline the intimacy which the other so assiduously endeavoured to cultivate. He accepted the frequent invitations of Latiaris with pleasure; went to his house with the freedom of an old acquaintance; and became every day more unreserved in his communications.

It afforded some satisfaction to Agrippina to learn from her old friend, that while she was apparently deserted, there were still in Rome those who felt for her situation; and who would no doubt be ready, whenever occasion offered, to stand forth to espouse the cause of her family. The eloquence with which she painted her grievances, and the asperity with which she spake of those who had been the authors of them, inflamed the imagination
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of Sabinus, and animated his zeal against the enemies of his house. Full of these sentiments, he one day met Latiaris, and immediately entered with him into discourse upon the common topic. Latiaris, making a signal of caution, told him in a whisper, that he had some intelligence concerning Sejanus to communicate, as soon as they were out of the reach of observation, which they might soon be, by turning into a bye street, where there was a lone house belonging to him, and of which he had the key. Sabinus instantly acquiesced. They arrived at the place, and found it as Latiaris had described, without inhabitant. They entered, and immediately began an interesting conversation on the gloomy aspect of public affairs, and the melancholy prospect of future evils. Instances of the unrelenting cruelty of the emperor were displayed, and rendered still more odious by the recapitulation of other detestable crimes with

which that cruelty was accompanied. Lartiaris declared that it was in malice to the human race that Tiberius had exalted this wretch to be the scourge of mankind, and asked his friend if he did not accord in his opinion.

Sabinus assured him that the opinion had long been his; as nothing else could account for one so jealous of authority transferring, as he did, the supreme power to an upstart, who had no other recommendation but arrogance and pre-eminence in vice. What had been the consequence? The best blood of Rome had flowed to glut the vengeance of this proud favourite. All who did not learn to fawn and crouch, and put on the degrading yoke of servitude, were devoted victims. To have a feeling of their country's honour or their country's interest, was accounted treason. Patriotism in this reign of tyranny was the worst of crimes; but it was the only crime which people were now ashamed

to commit. So far from daring to be virtuous, none had even the courage to give praise to virtue; and before any action could be approved or disapproved, the pleasure of Sejanus must be known.

Every assertion Sabinus made was confirmed by instances that were too notorious to admit of dispute. The detested system of espionage was next discussed, and called forth all the acrimony of Sabinus; who spoke of the infamous treachery of informers with that abhorrence which a generous mind naturally feels in contemplating baseness. Nor did Latiaris refuse his assent to the severe judgment which his friend passed upon this species of villainy; no blush tinged his cheek; no sudden emotion betrayed the internal feelings of his galled heart; or if a glance escaped him towards the ceiling of the room, that glance was unnoticed by Sabinus. Little did the good man think, that at that very moment three noblemen of equal rank with Latiaris, and
his

his coadjutors in iniquity, who had been by his contrivance secreted in a cavity between the roof of the house and the ceiling of the apartment, in order to overhear the conversation, were employed in taking notes of all that passed.!

The heart of Sabinus was too full of integrity to admit an idea of the possibility of being thus betrayed. He never could have imagined, that men who boasted of their high descent, and were proud of the superiority which they derived from birth and station, could have stooped to an act of perfidy which would have contaminated the vilest of the vile. But Sabinus, who had been brought up in camps, and had formed his notions of glory under the auspices of Germanicus, knew not how far the sentiments of ambition, when perverted to ignoble objects, can sink the human mind. He perhaps considered the hopes which Latiaris entertained of the consulship, as a security for his honour; and
little

little suspected that both he and his three friends, who were also candidates for that dignity, should treacherously have agreed to give the blood of an innocent man as the purchase of their hopes of preferment. To their depraved imaginations eternal infamy was a trifling consideration to pay for the gratification of seeing themselves raised to the highest office in the state, even though that office now conferred little more than the eclat of a name! Such are the consequences of the false ideas of glory that in a corrupt state of society are engendered by pride, and spread their baleful influence to the utter destruction of every noble and every generous principle!

On the first day of the year Agrippina received in the morning the usual compliments of congratulation from such of her friends as still dared to shew their respect to one who was no longer illumined by the smiles of prosperity. The interchange of gifts in this festive season was expressly prohibited

bited by Tiberius,* to whose gloomy mind every thing that seemed to bind the social tie, and to indicate harmony and goodwill, was particularly offensive. But it is difficult, even for the most absolute of princes, to change any custom that has been sanctioned by long-established practice; new-year's-day gifts were still offered and received; friends and neighbours still saluted each other with wishes of prosperity, (though that likewise had been forbidden;) and in spite of the proclamations of the emperor, the streets of Rome on the first of January continued to exhibit a scene of merriment and cheerfulness.

On this day, devoted to festivity, the inauguration of the consuls took place, and to the buoyant spirits of the populace gave an additional motive for rejoicing. The sacrifices having been offered, the procession passed with usual pomp to the senate-house, and the giddy multitude, whom

* Suetonius.

curiosity

curiosity had attracted to its precincts, continued to amuse themselves in the streets.

In the midst of their gaiety they were struck with consternation, on beholding certain officers of justice issue from the senate-house, and lay hold upon a man of high rank, whose dignified and venerable aspect commanded respect. “It is Sabinus! the brave Sabinus, the friend of Germanicus!” cried the astonished people, who thought the arrest had proceeded from mistake. They were soon undeceived. Sabinus was seized, and notwithstanding his struggles, dragged along the streets in the direction that led to the Gemonæ,* the place destined for the execution of the vilest malefactors. In vain did the executioners endeavour so to muffle his face in his robe as to stifle the sound of his voice; it was still heard, calling to the people that he was innocent; desiring them to mark the bloody opening of the year, and that other

* See Note G.

victims

victims should, ere its close, glut the malice of Sejanus.

The people were dismayed; overcome with horror and astonishment, they shrunk back from the unexampled spectacle. Terror prevailed over every other sentiment, and neither pity nor curiosity could resist its influence. All fled they knew not whither; the public places were in an instant abandoned, and the streets which were so lately filled with a jocund throng, became silent as the grave.

No friend had courage to follow, or to speak a word of comfort to, the unhappy man whom they saw devoted to destruction. But one faithful companion still remained, whose fidelity it was not in the power of adversity to shake. The favourite dog of Sabinus followed him to the dungeon in which he was immured previous to his execution; and after the agonies of death were passed, accompanied his body, as it was ignominiously dragged to the brink of
the

the precipice of the Gemonæ, where it was ordered to be exposed, as a warning to all who should dare to befriend the house of Germanicus.

Still the faithful animal continued to guard the remains of his deceased protector, whose loss he lamented by such pathetic howlings as awakened the sympathy of every heart. The pitying spectators brought food, which they kindly encouraged him to eat; but on taking the bread, instead of obeying the impulse of hunger, he fondly laid it on his master's mouth, and renewed his lamentations. Days thus passed, nor did he for a moment quit his post. The body was at length thrown into the Tiber, and the generous creature, still unwilling that it should perish, leaped into the water, and clasping the corpse between his paws, endeavoured to preserve it from sinking.* Such was the power of gratitude in an animal so inferiorly gifted

* Note H.

with

with reason; while those who boasted of its high endowments, so far perverted them, as to transform the inestimable blessing into a curse!

Too soon did the dismal news of the fate of poor Sabinus reach the ears of Agrippina. Almost in the same moment that she was informed of the accusation which had been laid before the senate in a letter from Tiberius, she heard of the execution of the sentence which their servility had decreed. The shock was very dreadful; it required all her fortitude to sustain its weight. She could have no doubt that the ruin of her most faithful friend was a prelude to her own; but the sad idea of having been fatal to every one who had been connected with her in the bonds of friendship, now pressed exclusively upon her heart.

Those who pitied her sufferings, endeavoured to soothe her by a repetition of what passed in the city, where the outrage committed on Sabinus had excited universal discontent. It was said, that “by

choosing a day sacred to the august ceremonies of religion, Tiberius gave notice of his intention to render cruelty systematic. On the first day of the year the magistrates were henceforth to open not only the temples and the altars, but the dungeons and the charnel-houses. No day was to be unpolluted with blood! Never, till now, on the first of January had the clank of chains been heard. Ill-omened year! (exclaimed they) ill-omened year! ushered in with the murder of a fellow-citizen!" *

Agrippina, overwhelmed with melancholy, heard, perhaps with less alarm than her friends, of an expression made use of by Tiberius in the letter of thanks which he thought proper to send the senate on their prompt compliance with his will in the affair of Sabinus. After commending their zeal, he added, that "his life was embittered with anxiety, and the secret machinations of insidious enemies kept him

* Tacitus.

in

in constant alarm." As every one saw that the allusion glanced at Agrippina and the elder prince, Asinius Gallus thought it his duty to make it evident that they had no dread of enquiry, and that they were unconscious of offence. He therefore rose, and moved an address to the emperor, humbly requesting him to reveal his secret disquietude, that the wisdom of the fathers might remove all cause of complaint.

Tiberius, who could not bear detection, no sooner saw by this address that his latent meaning had been discovered, than he marked Asinius Gallus for vengeance; but as this was not the proper opportunity for betraying his sentiments, he concealed them under the dissembling mask of friendship, and continued to express for Gallus unbounded respect and esteem.

Agrippina and Nero were now in a state of perpetual anxiety and apprehension. The creatures of Sejanus were employed to increase their fears by reports of designs entertained

entertained against their lives, and under the appearance of friendship to advise them, as the only means of securing their safety, either to put themselves under the protection of the German army, or to take sanctuary under the statue of Augustus in the Forum, and there implore the aid of the senate and the people. The advice was too humiliating for the lofty spirit of Agrippina; it was accordingly rejected both by her and her son: but this did not prevent the treacherous advisers from reporting that the project had been entertained, and was ripe for execution, when a timely discovery enabled Tiberius to defeat the treasonable purpose.

In this uncomfortable way many months elapsed. Towards the close of the year, a little gleam of sunshine broke through the cloud. Agrippina was now informed that Tiberius, in the plenitude of parental care, had been graciously pleased to seek out a suitable match for her eldest daughter,
and

and that in Cneius Domitius Ænobarbus he had found a person worthy of alliance with his illustrious family. To add to the honour, Tiberius proposed to give away the bride in person; though to avoid the bustle of a croud of company, he requested that the ceremonies of the nuptials should be performed at Rome.

This appearance of solicitude for the establishment of his grand-daughters did not fail to revive the deceitful flatteries of hope in Agrippina's ever sanguine mind. Domitius was the representative of an illustrious family; in the male line descended from noble ancestors, and on the maternal grand-nephew to Augustus, being grandson to Octavia, sister to that emperor.* These splendid considerations rendered the alliance acceptable to Agrippina; but had character been taken into the account, she ought sooner to have consigned her daughter to the arms of the meanest slave. In

* Note I.

an age of unexampled depravity, Domitius was considered as the most depraved. It was said of him in an after period, that *had he not been the father of Nero he would have been the worst of men*. But though it is highly probable that the youth of such a monster was tinged with the vices which disgrace his maturer years, it may be presumed that he had as yet had no opportunity of displaying his character in its true colours.

The intended bride, now in her fifteenth year, was beautiful and accomplished. Endowed with all that quickness of perception, and vivacity of fancy, which so often passes for superiority of talent, she made an early progress in every branch of literature, and is said to have composed both in prose and verse with facility and elegance. Her taste was improved by an early acquaintance with the best authors, and all the stores of Grecian and Roman literature enriched her mind. Were knowledge and taste all
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that is necessary to direct the conduct in the path of rectitude, the younger Agrippina would have been a model of virtue. But alas! while her understanding was cultivated with assiduous care, her mind was exposed to a series of impressions which tended to counteract its influence. That most important part of education which arises from the circumstances in which the individual is placed, was all against her. Pride of birth, indignation at injustice, resentment of injuries, were the first impressions received by her young mind. Hatred and revenge were never taught by precept, but they were excited by example; while pride, which coalesces with every malignant passion, and augments its fury, was enforced as the prerogative of high descent. When we add to this the flattery of the servile train by which she was surrounded; the early lessons of dissimulation, rendered indispensable by the necessity of concealing from so many of her nearest relations the
resentment

resentment that their conduct inspired; and the approbation which was frequently in her hearing given to splendid vice; we shall not wonder at the inefficacy of those precepts of philosophy, which she was rather taught to admire than to practise. If she had been so fortunate as to have been united to a man of virtue, she might still have been virtuous; but with such a husband as Domitius, there was little room to hope that Agrippina would escape the contagion of vice.

The nuptials of the younger Agrippina were just celebrated, when a stop was put to the rejoicings by the death of the aged empress. Livia, though upwards of ninety, had lost little of the vigour of her mind, and rather bowed beneath the pressure of years than of infirmity. She had for some time perceived the necessity of supporting the family of her grandson against the invidious arts of Sejanus, and the cruel malignity of her ungrateful son. Perhaps,

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even in the hard mind of Livia the sentiments of nature had some share in the formation of this resolution. The children of Germanicus imperceptibly gained on her affection: she liked to see herself surrounded by descendants, whose promising appearance flattered her pride, and kept alive her ambition. The youngest son of Agrippina, as he seems to have most constantly resided with Livia,* was probably her favourite; and from the future character of Caligula we might perhaps infer, that her affection and her enmity were alike pernicious. Born to be the bane and ruin of her husband's house, her death was in the present juncture no less fatal to the descendants of Augustus, than her life had been injurious.

Tiberius hated his mother with a perfect hatred; but he had been too long accustomed to yield to her authority to dare very openly to oppose it. The habit of

* Suetonius.

submission

submission triumphed even over the pride of self-will and the passions of jealousy and revenge. That breast, impenetrable to gratitude, and which was never warmed by one emotion of filial love, had yet been so deeply impressed with awe, as to render it impossible for him to throw off the yoke which he abhorred.

Ashamed of a deference which might have been suspected to proceed from a sense of obligation or attachment, he had long treated his mother with studied neglect: nor had he lost any opportunity of mortifying her in public, by preventing the senate from conferring on her those honours which they were so much inclined to lavish.* But in the midst of this apparent undutifulness, he was still afraid of her whom he affected to despise. She preserved the power of controlling his passions: he dreaded her rebuke: he trembled at her displeasure. Long had he wished for the

* Note K.

day

day which was to emancipate him from this bondage. At length an express from Rome informed him that the fond parent to whom he owed his present greatness, and who had gone such lengths to procure his aggrandisement, was no more. A transient flush of joy suffused his cheek at the intelligence: but wishing to conceal his transport, he desired the messenger immediately to return, to notify his intention of paying the last duties to the remains of his beloved parent.

Every thing was prepared for the funeral solemnity, when another express from Caprea gave orders for delay. Day after day passed on, and no appearance of Tiberius. The corpse became putrid. The people who were obliged to attend it began to murmur, and necessity at length compelled the executors of Livia's will to order the body to be committed to the funeral pile. By her directions Caligula delivered from the rostrum an oration in honour of
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her memory. “ Her domestic conduct was said to have been formed on the model of primitive manners ; but that by a graceful ease unknown to her sex in the time of the republic, she had the address to soften the rigour of ancient virtue.” Thus in corrupt times does elegance of manners usurp the praise that is due to unblemished morals, and that which only deserves applause as the ornament of virtue, comes to be regarded as its essence!

Public honours were forthwith decreed by the senate to the memory of the empress, whom they offered to deify by unanimous consent. But Tiberius did not choose that his mother should be worshipped. In his reply to the address of the senate, he not only prohibited her being made a goddess, but glanced reproach upon her conduct in the formation of her friendship. This, however, he generously attributed to *female levity*. But while with the arrogance common to such minds he thus

thus included the whole sex in the odium cast upon the individual, he was not long in shewing the malice of his heart in still stronger colours. He not only prevented his mother's will from being executed, and seized upon the treasure from which the legacies ought to have been paid, but persecuted all who were mentioned by her with implacable resentment. None escaped ruin who had ever been known as Livia's friends. Between those who had attached themselves to her from interested motives, and those who really merited esteem, no distinction was made: all were sooner or later involved in the same fate.

From the contemplation of events which present the most mortifying view of human depravity, it will afford some consolation to turn our eyes for a moment to brighter scenes. Let us with gratitude remember, that this dark and gloomy period, in which vice seemed to reign triumphant over a benighted world, was the season chosen in
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the councils of Divine Wisdom for the display not of judgment, but of grace! It was now that the “day-spring from on high began to dawn.” While Tiberius in his unhallowed solitude was endeavouring to lull the pangs of conscience by draining the Circean cup, and drinking deep of the very dregs of iniquity, his subjects in a distant province were listening to the preaching of repentance.* In the wilderness of Judea, the voice of John the Baptist was lifted up to proclaim the glad tidings of approaching light. Already, by exhortations to penitence, had he begun “to prepare the ways of the LORD, and to make his paths straight.” Already had his doctrines penetrated the consciences of those who were warned to “flee from the wrath to come,” and commenced that change in the hearts and sentiments of individuals, which in the language of prophecy had been compared to those con-

* See St. Luke's Gospel, chap. iii. vultions

vulsions of nature, in which “every valley is filled up, and every mountain brought low.” In the course of our narrative the necessity of such a change must have appeared sufficiently evident; and as philosophy had already exerted its utmost powers, it was plain that it was not by human wisdom such a change could be accomplished. Let us not forget that its way was prepared by humility and repentance, and that its fruits were righteousness, purity, and love!

CHAPTER VII.

SEJANUS, *his Pride, Ambition, and Cruelty.*—*Prosecution of VARUS; eluded by the Senate.*—*The Children of AGRIPPINA; their Situation and Characters.*—*Increasing Rancour of TIBERIUS.*—*AGRIPPINA and NERO accused before the Senate.*—*Consternation of the Senators.*—*Behaviour of the People.*

A. D. 29—30.

AGRIPPINA was not long left in doubt concerning the consequences that were likely to result from Livia's death. An event which strengthened the power of Sejanus, could not fail to wear a threatening aspect to the house of Germanicus; and such was now the authority of the favourite, that the dread of his displeasure seemed

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to have conquered every other sentiment in the breasts of those who, from birth and situation, ought to have been superior to servile fear. But pride, when seduced by luxury, loses the support of courage. Terror easily attains dominion over the dissipated; and as the licentious are always selfish, no generous effort in favour of others can be expected from those who are the slaves of vice.

The court paid to Sejanus convinced Agrippina of the little dependence that was to be placed on the friendship of what is termed *the world*. She daily saw those in whom she had been accustomed to place confidence, and who had been liberal in their vows of eternal friendship, sneaking off to Campania, in order to obtain a transient view of the emperor, and his minister, when they vouchsafed in their failing parties to approach the shore. She heard with indignation of the avidity with which at that auspicious moment the nobles
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of the highest rank, mingling with the populace, pressed forward in crowds to catch a glance from the favourite, and to load him with those hollow compliments, which were perhaps louder from the internal consciousness of the maledictions with which they were accompanied. This open display of servility inspired Agrippina with sentiments of undisguised contempt; all the actors in the scene were the objects of her scorn; and those who returned in despair, after having in vain endeavoured to obtain an audience of the great man, had their mortification aggravated by her derision.

Very different were the sensations with which Sejanus viewed the mean and unworthy conduct of this degenerate race. He beheld in it the security of maintaining himself in his present power, and his advancement to future greatness. Already Rome crouched in bondage beneath his feet. A step—a single step seemed now all that was between him and imperial dignity.

nity. That step it seemed not difficult to take. The murder of three individuals was all that was now absolutely necessary to make him master of the empire: and if the protracted life of Tiberius should too long withhold him from the honour of being first in name as he already was in power, nothing could be more easy than to find an opportunity of shortening it.

Inspired by the demon of ambition, Sejanus could not separate the ideas of absolute power and complete felicity. It was in vain that he observed in Tiberius the most striking example of human misery; in vain that he observed how much the unrestrained gratification of every capricious desire, and every malignant passion, augmented in him the feelings of wretchedness. The fire of ambition burned with too fierce a flame to be quenched by the reasonings of cool experience. The guilt in which he had already plunged increased its ardour, and impelled him to proceed
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in his career, without stopping to reflect on the possibility of its terminating in his own destruction.

The jealous and vindictive temper of Tiberius exposed him to the danger of snares into which candour and generosity would never have been betrayed. Had he been intent upon acts of benevolence, he might indeed have been so far misled by the artifices of a false friend, as to have bestowed his favours on unworthy objects; but this, though it might have occasioned a casual regret, would never have subjected him to the bitterness of remorse, nor awakened the terrors which arise from the dread of retaliation. These terrors were the engines which Sejanus employed to work the ruin of all whose enmity he had reason to dread, or who were in any way likely to prove obstacles to his ambition. All whom gratitude or affection had bound to the descendants of Augustus were included in this description; of them therefore

fore few could hope to escape the destroyer's vengeance.

Many of the principal adherents of the house of Germanicus had already perished; but as some of those had left relations who were known to participate in their sentiments, and who were supposed to entertain a deep resentment of their injuries, these must necessarily be exterminated, before Sejanus could find himself at liberty to proceed. Quintilius Varus, the son of Claudia Pulchra, was marked out as the first victim. Three circumstances combined to render the destruction of Varus extremely desirable to Sejanus, and to the wretches whom avarice had led to be the instruments of his wickedness. Varus was the relation of Agrippina, and the son of her most beloved friend: he had been, by the injustice of Tiberius, deprived of a mother whom he dearly loved, and whose loss he still deplored with filial tenderness: and lastly, Varus was possessed of an immense fortune.

fortune. The last consideration procured for Sejanus all the assistance he wanted.

Afer, who had with unblushing effrontery, stood forward as the prosecutor of the mother, was again induced to prostitute his talents to accomplish the ruin of the son. The noble behaviour of Agrippina had touched his heart with momentary remorse, and excited the liveliest emotions of admiration and esteem; but these feelings having no support from principle, were transient as the gilded clouds of morning, which disperse without leaving a wreck behind.

When talents are united to profligacy, nothing less than a miracle can effect a reformation. Afer, having spent the wages of his iniquity upon his pleasures, was again involved in debt, and again must have recourse to his genius to extricate himself from embarrassment, and to procure the means of gratifying his taste for luxury. The large possessions of Varus

rus offered a temptation too powerful to be resisted. Nor was it the needy profligate alone whose virtue yielded to the temptation. Publius Dolabella, the descendant of a noble family, a man related to Varus by the ties of blood, and who held a conspicuous situation among the Roman senators, basely consented to join in the conspiracy from the hopes of sharing in the profits.

Agrippina had been of late too much accustomed to see the fatal termination of prosecutions that had been commenced against those in whom she took an interest, to entertain any hopes of her friend. She already considered Varus as lost; and all the grief that she had suffered on account of his mother's fate was again renewed. Agreeably was she surprised to find that in this instance the senate proved less compliant than it had hitherto been. No senator, indeed, had sufficient hardihood openly to oppose a prosecution which was
known

known to have been commenced under the auspices of Sejanus. But by resolving that the cause should stand over till the emperor's return to Rome, they put a negative upon the proceedings, and left to Dolabella and Afer the mortification of having sold their honour without any other reward than infamy.

Greatly as Agrippina might rejoice in the unexpected escape of Varus, she could not but be sensible that Sejanus had so far gained his end, as to render it impossible for a man involved in such circumstances openly to espouse her cause. While the prosecution hung over his head, Varus must in prudence remain passive. Of his advice and assistance she must necessarily be deprived: nor would it be safe for him even to continue those attentions which may be considered as a part of the revenues of the great, and of which no person who has been accustomed to receive them, can be deprived, without experiencing

a very sensible mortification. When the world withdrew its smiles, it was not in her own family that Agrippina could look for consolation. Jealousy and ambition had sown the seeds of variance between her sons; but though she considered the part that had been taken by Drusus, in openly adhering to her enemy, as altogether indefensible; she, by making the quarrels of Nero her own, took a very injudicious method of displaying her resentment. By this conduct she piqued the pride of Drusus, and inflamed his violence; and thus created an addition to her own misery.

Incidents every day occurred to shew that Drusus was entirely under the management of Sejanus; who artfully endeavoured to make the young prince appear more entirely devoted to him than he in reality was, and thus by widening the breach, prevented the possibility of such explanations as might have led to reconciliation.

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Could Agrippina have borne with meekness these trials of her patience, she might perhaps have defeated the designs of her adversary, and by re-uniting her children in the bonds of affection have rendered them too powerful to be attacked. But meekness and moderation were not the habits of Agrippina's mind. Her affection for Drusus added to the pain which was inflicted by his conduct, and infused into her reproaches a greater degree of bitterness. Her remonstrances appeared not so much to be dictated by wounded tenderness, as by the haughtiness of offended pride; they were consequently galling to the proud spirit of her son, who found in them a justification of his undutiful behaviour; and as he never considered how much he had been himself to blame, he attributed every expression of resentment to an unjust and unnatural aversion. Considering Nero as the cause of his mother's antipathy to him, he strenuously endeavoured

endeavoured to form a party against his brother, whose amiable manners he represented as the effect of hypocrisy. By no misrepresentation could Drusus succeed in throwing a stain on the character of Nero. But though acknowledged to be the heir of his father's virtues, he was not believed to be the favourite of Tiberius; and as the party of his brother was openly espoused by Sejanus, many thought it the safer part to follow the example of the minister, or at least to act upon the reserve.

Few were the friends to whom Agrippina could now with safety unburthen the fulness of her heart. Her mother-in-law Antonia, with a prudence nearly allied to selfishness, kept aloof from all that might disturb her peace; and in her care not to embroil herself in the factions which so unfortunately prevailed in her family, put it out of her own power to contribute to the restoration of its tranquillity. From the length of time which the two elder princes
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had spent beneath her roof in the absence of their parents, she might have been expected to have entertained for them some degree of partiality. If she felt such attachment, she did not consider it as prudent to display it. She treated Agrippina and all her children with a constant and equal kindness, but it was a kindness far distant from the cordiality of warm affection.

After the death of Livia, Caligula resided much with Antonia, who does not, however, appear to have conciliated his regard; it is indeed probable, that by endeavouring to counteract the effects of the indulgence he had received from the empress, she excited that dislike of which he afterwards gave such shocking proofs. In this youth Agrippina saw that she could have little comfort. As he advanced in years, the fond hopes which had been inspired by the promising appearance of his childhood, were gradually expelled. She beheld with pain the alteration that had taken place in
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the expression of his countenance, which but too truly indicated the jarring passions of his soul. Gladly would she have attributed to disease the distortion of his features; but though the epilepsy, with which he was afflicted, might affect his looks, and even injure his understanding, it could not account for the depravity with which his young mind was already tinged. Agrippina did not perhaps reflect on the circumstances in which her son had hitherto been placed; she did not consider that from his cradle he had breathed an atmosphere which was loaded with the contagion of vice. From the adulation of the soldiers he had been taught pride and vanity; from their conduct he had learned cruelty; from their outrages he had been inspired with fear. Agrippina, by making him a party in her resentments, increased the irritability of his mind; while timidity rendered him cautious and deceitful. Brought up in a croud, he was without affection; surrounded by flatterers,

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he knew not the value of a friend. He had artfully contrived to insinuate himself into the favour of Livia, to whom he behaved with every appearance of respect; but no sooner was she dead, than he treated her memory with contempt. How far he might be encouraged by Antonia to vent his spleen in sarcasms upon the late empress, it is impossible to determine; but it is highly probable, that when, in speaking of her wisdom, he called her an "Ulysses in petticoats," he was pretty well assured that he might take such liberties without giving offence.

The two younger daughters of Agrippina were still in childhood and innocence; they were consequently objects of hope, the only pleasurable emotion which her mind had for a length of time experienced; but in the circumstances in which she was placed, hope could not be sanguine. The accounts which she now received of her sister Julia's death, recalled to her recollection the period when her sister was, like
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them, displaying the first bloom of opening beauty, pure as the flowers of spring, and gay and happy as the lambs which sported in the meadows. In the unhappy Julia the gaiety of innocence had soon been transformed into the levity of vice, and how miserable had been the consequences! Three and twenty years had she languished in wretched exile, before death, whom she considered as the only friend of the wretched, brought a wished relief.

Agrippina shuddered to think of the possibility that such a fate might at some distant period be reserved for a child of her's, incurred by similar depravity. But though in her own conduct she has left the strongest proof that vice was the object of her aversion, and virtue of her admiration and regard, it would have been difficult, if not impossible, for her to have instilled these principles into the minds of her children. Had she given them 'line upon line, and precept upon precept,' they would not have escaped corruption, while they were ex-

posed to impressions which tended to produce associations of a nature directly opposite. All who appeared to them to be happy, were the vicious and the dissipated; with vice and dissipation their ideas of happiness were consequently connected. The few whom they had heard spoken of as virtuous, were at the same time lamented as miserable; they were the victims of triumphant villainy, nor were their sufferings or virtues honoured by the voice of public approbation. The virtuous were therefore the objects of pity, but it was pity too nearly allied to contempt. These were impressions, which even with the assistance of more powerful motives than Agrippina had to offer, it would have been extremely difficult to remove; to her the task (had she been sufficiently enlightened to attempt it) would have proved impracticable.

While Agrippina was passing the heavy hours in anxiety or sorrow, she was considered by the multitude as numbered among
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the favourites of fortune, to whom the fates had destined the full enjoyment of felicity. Entitled by her birth to the envied pre-eminence of princely rank, surrounded by a numerous train of obsequious domestics, attended wherever she went with a guard of honour, and living in all the splendour suitable to her station, the short-sighted vulgar imagined not how it was possible for her to taste of misery. It is only by experience that the inefficacy of external circumstances can be fully proved; nor can those who have never felt the pressure of any evil excepting poverty, be easily made to comprehend the truth of the observation so feelingly expressed by the wise King of Israel: "the heart knoweth its own bitterness, nor doth a stranger intermeddle with its joy."

Agrippina had long been watching with anxiety the clouds which seemed to gather round her head, but had no apprehension of immediate danger from the threatening storm.

storm. She was sensible that Tiberius would never lose an opportunity of mortifying her; and that Sejanus was too conscious of having already offended her beyond forgiveness, not to employ all his interest to work her ruin; but still her character inspired her with confidence, nor was she without hope that she might one day triumph in the downfall of her insulting foe. Sejanus, high as he now was in favour, did not to her seem perfectly secure. Tiberius was incapable of affection, it was therefore only by interest that he could be attached to any one; and though Sejanus now appeared so necessary to him as the agent of tyranny, a time might come when he might incur suspicion and disgrace; or if he even continued to bask in the sunshine of fortune during all the life-time of his master, the scene might soon change. Tiberius was now in the seventieth year of his age; his constitution, though uncommonly robust, had been impaired by vicious indulgence.

indulgence. Already had the symptoms of disease appeared; the scorbutic humours of his blood had covered his face with blotches, and rendered his countenance so hideous, that he could not bear to have it looked at. It was not therefore probable that he could long survive. Her sons were then the acknowledged heirs of empire; and Nero, already the favourite of the people, had such superior pretensions as no faction would be able to resist.

By arguments such as these, Agrippina endeavoured to support her drooping spirits; she was not always successful in her efforts; but though she could not lose the sense of present evil, nor drive from her mind the apprehension of future sufferings, she was too much mistress of herself to permit any symptoms of uneasiness to appear. To seem afraid of Sejanus, was in her opinion to give him a triumph greater than any in which he had hitherto gloried. Far from appearing humbled by the defection

fection of so many pretended friends as had of late deserted her, in order to pay their court to Sejanus, she assumed in her deportment an air of more lofty dignity. Pride forbad her to expostulate or to complain, and taught her the art of appearing cheerful with an aching heart; but the acrimony which was mingled in her expressions of contempt, betrayed the wound she so assiduously endeavoured to conceal. The language of forgiveness was a stranger to her lips. In her friendship and enmity she was equally ardent, and equally open; nor did any regard to prudential considerations restrain her from uttering her sentiments with peculiar energy.

In vain was she assured by her friends, that Tiberius would sooner or later be made acquainted with all that was now passing in Rome. In vain was she told, that the road to Caprea was filled with informers, who, by means of a regular correspondence with the domestic spies stationed in every distinguished family,

family, were enabled to report, not only the private actions, but the secret sentiments of individuals. Though perfectly aware that the power of Sejanus was now without control, and that it would at least be prudent to avoid aggravating his malice by repeatedly provoking his resentment, she continued to speak of him with asperity, and to treat his friends with haughtiness and contempt.

In the eyes of Sejanus, Agrippina's greatest crime was standing in the way of his ambition. By no mode of conduct could she therefore have found it possible to conciliate his good-will: but in thus permitting herself to follow the impulse of her present feelings, she furnished him with weapons for her destruction. Nothing was easier than to give the colouring of ambition to her conduct. The freedom with which she spoke of the minister was interpreted into an avowed disrespect for the emperor. The dignity with which she had hitherto repelled every insult,

sult, and the undaunted spirit she evinced in the support of her friends, were construed into proofs of guilt. It was insinuated, that no female in her circumstances could have the courage she displayed, unless sustained by the consciousness of having secured the support of a powerful party. Of this party Sejanus affected to entertain the utmost dread. He represented to Tiberius, “ that should they proceed in their rebellious designs, Nero would soon be master of the Roman world. The emperor would then in vain exert an authority which, from a blameable lenity, he now permitted to lie dormant. Agrippina, he said, had by her artifices contrived to gain the esteem of the people, nor was the allegiance of the nobles, in case of a revolt, to be depended on as secure. Where was the great family in Rome that did not feel resentment for the loss of some distinguished relative, whom Tiberius had in his wisdom seen it necessary to cut off? Under the mask
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of adulation they disguised their sentiments, but the desire of revenge lay rankling in their hearts. Was it from them that the emperor could expect support against the usurpation of a youthful prince, whose engaging manners gave the promise of a mild administration? Sejanus indeed hoped that the army—the prætorian guards at least, would remain faithful; since under his command he had done much to secure their loyalty. But the name of Germanicus was still too much adored by the legions, to answer for the consequences.”

Tiberius brooded in gloomy silence over these alarming hints. The deeper he had sunk in pollution, the more susceptible had he become of the impressions of terror, and the feelings of aversion. A consciousness of his own increased unworthiness increased his detestation of the human race; but it was those whom he had particularly injured, who were still the objects of his peculiar hate. He remembered how often
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he had caused the tears of Agrippina to flow, and in the recollection of every wound he had inflicted on her heart, found a justification of his hatred. The blood of her murdered brothers—her mother's dying groans—her beloved husband's untimely fate—all appeared to Tiberius to be registered in Agrippina's soul; and tormented as he was by misery in his unhallowed solitude, he thought it impossible that aught save the hope of vengeance could support her spirits. He sullenly ruminated on the various ways by which these hopes of vengeance might be accomplished. She was too ambitious of fame to employ the assassin's dagger, or the deadly potion; but if by exalting her character above his, she could shine at his expence, was she not guilty of a greater crime? Should she even have resolved to wait till years and infirmities had brought him to the grave, was it not the expectation that her son, her darling Nero, should then be promoted to

impérial sway, which inspired the resolution? Through Nero she doubtless expected to gratify her own ambition: already in imagination he saw her exulting in the success of her hopes, and hailed by the heartfelt gratulations of the people, who, in proportion as they loved the son of Germanicus, would reprobate the memory of him who had been his father's enemy.

Long had Tiberius dwelt on every circumstance which could tend to aggravate his hatred, before he assumed courage to strike the blow, by which alone he could appease the fury of the passions which incessantly tormented his breast. Nor would he have proceeded till death had removed his mother from the world, had not the impatience of Sejanus urged him to the immediate execution of his purpose. In the life-time of the empress, Agrippina thought herself secure; but even then, at the instigation of Sejanus, a letter of accusation had been framed against her, but
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which Tiberius had transmitted to his mother, either as a matter of form, or in hopes of having his views seconded by her approbation.

Livia, who possessed to the last a superiority in quickness of discernment, instantly penetrated the designs of Sejanus; and assured that he had it in view to raise himself upon the ruins of the imperial family, she vehemently remonstrated with her son against a measure into which he had been hurried by the misrepresentations of insidious enemies. Thus did she when on the verge of the grave exert her feeble endeavours to protect those, who, but for her, had never stood in need of protection. Great had been her power of doing evil, but short and limited was her opportunity of doing good: Livia died almost immediately after this exertion, and by her death left Tiberius at liberty to proceed without control.

Agrippina, ignorant of these transactions, was quite unconscious of the approaching

danger. She heard that the senate had been hastily summoned on account of the arrival of dispatches from Tiberius, and perhaps might dread to hear of their containing a fatal denunciation against some person in whom she took an interest. But for herself she at present apprehended nothing further than a repetition of those trials and vexations to which she had of late been so much accustomed; and after indulging a few conjectures, returned to those studies in which, since her misfortunes, she had found most delight.

The senators meanwhile assembled in the temple. Having paid their devotions with an offering of frankincense and wine on the altar of the god to whom it was dedicated, they took their seats. The presiding magistrate then with solemnity explained the reason of the meeting, and after some flattering compliments to the wisdom and goodness of the emperor, laid before the house the paper which he had graciously been pleased to address to his care. The

The letter was opened with due respect, and listened to with profound attention. It began in the vague and hesitating manner so frequently employed by Tiberius; nor did it seem clear at what it aimed, till mention was made of Agrippina and her son. It then assumed a style of such severe invective as left no room to doubt that they were the objects of his vengeance; but still no specific charge was urged against them. So spotless had been the conduct of Agrippina, that a haughty carriage and unconquerable pride was all that the most exquisite malice could lay to her charge. Nero was, indeed, accused of dissipation; but no plot to levy war against the state, no treasonable practice or design was imputed to him. Nothing was alleged against him that could be construed into crime; all that appeared was, that he had the misfortune of being offensive to Tiberius.

When the reading of the letter was finished, a profound silence followed. The
fathers

fathers sat in mute astonishment, scarcely crediting the testimony of their senses, and willing to believe that all they had heard was the illusion of a dream. Agrippina, though no longer courted by the vain and the interested, was still the object of universal respect. Her illustrious birth, her high rank, and still more exalted character, rendered her person sacred even in the eyes of the most profligate. Sentiments so long cherished could not in a moment yield to new impressions; but as none had courage to act in direct opposition to the emperor, it was only by murmurs and ejaculation that their feelings were expressed.

At length one of the creatures of Sejanus, a despicable wretch, whose name has not been recorded, thought proper to rise, and move that the contents of the letter should be taken into consideration. The motion was immediately seconded by Cotta Messalinus, one of the most noted profligates of a profligate age, a man who
made

made a sale of his talents, and perverted the art of eloquence to the most pernicious purposes. In the present instance his eloquence was of no avail. No other senator shewed an inclination to proceed. Those in office knew not how to act, and all the leading members were either struck with horror, or involved in doubt and perplexity.

To the great satisfaction of the fathers, Junius Rusticus at length arose. This man, from his intimacy with Tiberius, was supposed to be acquainted with his secret wishes. He had lately been appointed register of the acts of the senate, an employment never bestowed but on the emperor's confidential friends. His character was every way worthy of the court he served: and as he was believed incapable of any generous impulse, it was expected that he would not hesitate to explain what the emperor's letter had left in such obscurity. Rusticus had not, however, been properly instructed. By some strange neglect he
had

had been permitted to remain a stranger to the intentions of Tiberius; and as the letter before the house, though full of acrimonious expressions, was without precision, and pointed to no clear and definite purpose, he wisely concluded that it was a mere ebullition of spleen, and had no other object than to perplex the fathers, and to mortify the lofty spirit of Agrippina. He therefore assumed the tone of moderation, and concluded a speech of some length by moving that the consuls should adjourn the debate.

Before Rusticus had finished his harangue, the senate-house was beset with the cries of the multitude, and the names of Agrippina and Nero were heard repeated from every quarter with clamorous importunity. The crowd every moment increased, and soon became formidable. “Long live Tiberius! long live Agrippina and Nero! the letter is a forgery!” were the sentences shouted by the innumerable throng.

throng. The images of Agrippina and Nero, borne aloft by the populace, increased the tumult of their passions by sensible objects, and had not the vote of adjournment pacified their fury, it is impossible to say to what extravagancies they might at that moment have proceeded.

Intelligence of all that passed had by this time reached the ears of Agrippina. The astonishment which for a time overpowered her faculties, soon gave place to indignation, but it was an indignation full of the bitterness of wrath. Her situation had long been comfortless, and she now felt that it was beset with dangers; the passions were however at present too much agitated to permit her thoughts to dwell on any thing but the insult which had been offered to her character and dignity. To have her name mentioned with disrespect in an letter publicly addressed to the senate, was an humiliation to which she could not submit with patience. It was
intolerable

intolerable to her spirit; nor till the violence of her first emotions was in some degree abated, did she derive any satisfaction from the striking proofs of attachment and esteem which had been given her upon this occasion by persons of every rank and denomination.

The appearance of Nero gave a new turn to her feelings. At sight of her son she melted into tenderness. The idea of the danger to which he was evidently exposed by the machinations of his enemies, opened in her breast a new source of anguish. She knew that he was innocent, and that the charge of debauchery, the only crime alleged against him by Tiberius, was without foundation; but she likewise knew that innocence was no shield against oppression and injustice, and that at Caprea virtue was deemed the most unpardonable of offences.

Nero mingled his tears with hers; he besought her not to involve herself in his fate,

fate, but by seeking a reconciliation with Drusus, to obtain his protection, which, as Sejanus could refuse him nothing, would effectually secure her from further molestation. As for him his life had long been miserable ; the consciousness of having been betrayed by the wife of his bosom, the object of his tenderest affection, had deprived his soul of peace ; she whom he had so fondly cherished and so dearly loved, would rejoice in his ruin, to which her perfidy had so directly led. To escape the snares that were spread for him, he knew to be impossible ; but he wished to see his mother extricated from the danger of being entangled in them, and declared that in her safety he should heartily rejoice.

The generous soul of Agrippina revolted with horror from the proposal. To forsake a son who had been always dutiful and affectionate, and from a selfish consideration of her own safety to stoop to ask forgiveness of a child who had by his conduct

duſt given her the moſt juſt offence, were alike repugnant to every feeling of her heart. By exerting herſelf to re-animate the drooping ſpirits of Nero, ſhe in ſome meaſure reſtored her own. The arrival of friends who ſucceſſively came in with freſh intelligence concerning the zeal and affection of the populace, gradually excited the pleaſurable feelings which ariſe from a conſcious triumph over malice or injuſtice. She lent a willing ear to thoſe who endeavoured to perſuade her that the triumph was complete: and gladly indulged the hope, that Tiberius, finding himſelf defeated in his deſign of expoſing them to inſult, would deſiſt from perſecuting her, either in her own perſon, or in that of her beloved and amiable ſon.

CHAPTER VIII.

Publication of Speeches attributed to the Senators.—Their effect upon TIBERIUS.—He threatens the Senate; the Senate complies.—AGRIPPINA and her Son declared Enemies of the Public.—Situation of AGRIPPINA.—AGRIPPINA and NERO taken into Custody; carried to the Coast.—Malicious Joy of TIBERIUS; enraged at the Fortitude of AGRIPPINA.—NERO sent to the Isle of Pontia.—AGRIPPINA barbarously treated; sent to Pandatara.—NERO murdered.—PONTIUS PILATE.—The Centurion.—The Roman Soldiers, witnesses of the Death and Resurrection of CHRIST.

A. D. 30.

THE open display which Tiberius had now made of his implacable enmity to the house of Germanicus, produced a deep sensation in the public mind. But in
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the midst of the feelings of horror, resentment, and alarm, some consolation was afforded by the conduct of the senate, which, in declining to take the emperor's letter into consideration, had shewn some remains of that spirit, which, if properly exerted, might yet prove a bulwark against the attacks of tyranny and oppression. To keep alive this hope, and to vex Tiberius by an unequivocal declaration of the sentiments of the people, speeches such as would upon a similar occasion have been spoken when liberty of debate prevailed, were written and circulated, purporting to have been delivered in the senate-house by the persons to whose names they were severally ascribed. So well was the forgery executed, (if forgery it can be called) that the character of every supposed speaker was preserved, while each in his own peculiar manner was made to express the feelings of indignation, horror, or contempt. To Sejanus every scheme of villainy,

lainy was attributed: Sejanus was accused as the author of every public misfortune, and of every individual injury. His base ingratitude to the descendants of Augustus, his insufferable pride, avarice, and ambition, were pourtrayed in the most lively colours, and substantiated by reference to facts, which Sejanus had hoped effectually to conceal.

Agrippina had been too well informed of all that had passed, to be imposed upon by these productions. They were nevertheless extremely acceptable to her, nor was it the part of her or her friends to undeceive those who believed in their authenticity. A copy which had been privately dispatched to Caprea, fell into the hands of Sejanus, and as he had at first no suspicion of the artifice which had been employed, filled him with rage and consternation. His fury against the senate knew no bounds, nor did the detection of the fraud quell the violence of his resentment. Had they
not

not demurred on the letter of Tiberius, no impostor would have had an opportunity to vent his virulence under the covert of such respected names!

Tiberius, who had been so long accustomed to find the senate devoted to his will, as to consider that assembly in no other light than as a convenient implement of tyranny, was not prepared for even the shadow of opposition. He expected that a hint from him would have been sufficient to decide the fate of Agrippina and her son. Great therefore was his indignation, on finding that the want of any specific crime to lay to their charge was likely to prove an obstacle to the accomplishment of his wishes. Sejanus by every art endeavoured to augment his rage. He produced the pretended speeches of the fathers, as proofs of their disaffection, and represented the people as ripe for revolt. “A new council of state was,” he said, “set up, and the decrees of that mock
assembly

assembly were published with an air of authority. What now remains for the discontented, but to unsheathe the sword, and choose for their leaders, and even proclaim as emperors, the very persons whose images had been displayed as the banners of sedition and insurrection?"

The enraged emperor dispatched in his fury a letter to the senate filled with expressions of the keenest reproach and bitterest resentment: he renewed his complaints against Agrippina and her son, and exclaimed with violence against the conduct of Junius Rusticus, by whose artifice the authority of the prince had been eluded, and his judgment set at nought. A proclamation, couched in terms of equal severity, was at the same time addressed to the populace concerning their late conduct, and warning them against the repetition of a similar offence, on pain of being punished as traitors and rebels.

Neither letter nor proclamation failed in producing the desired effect. The fathers, on hearing the threats of the emperor, looked on each other in consternation and dismay. Their pusillanimous spirits died within them at the dread idea of his resentment; and from the moment that servile fear took possession of their hearts, all that was due to honour, integrity, and justice, was forgotten. Without daring to enter upon any debate, they instantly agreed to an humble supplication and address, in which they deprecated the emperor's displeasure, apologised for their past neglect, and gave the strongest assurances of being ready and willing to prove their zeal by pronouncing judgment in whatever way he should be pleased to direct.

Agrippina heard with indignant scorn of this sudden alteration in the sentiments of the fathers, among whom were many who had been bound by solemn vows, and the still stronger ties of gratitude and obligation,

tion, to protect the widow and children of Germanicus at the risk of life and fortune. She was now deserted by all ! All had basely yielded to the ascendancy of fear, and with a selfish regard to their own immediate interest, had offered to become the instruments of her destruction. Her generous spirit, which would have braved any danger in defence of injured innocence, was filled with indignation at the perfidious meanness of men whose high station and illustrious birth ought to have been considered as a pledge for magnanimity and honour ! She saw that the consequences would to her be fatal, but collecting the strength of her mind, resolved to wait with fortitude the bursting of the gathered storm.

Tiberius, somewhat pacified by the submission of the senate, returned an immediate answer to their dispatches, in which he declared that his mind was on the rack; and that various apprehensions, like an in-ward

ward fire, consumed his peace. He knew, he said, by certain intelligence, that Agrippina and her son had formed a dangerous league, and that their conspiracy, if not prevented, would ere long bring ruin on the state.

These dark hints which were still vague and without precision, were the only grounds which the senate had to proceed upon in the trial of two of the first personages in the Roman empire. As no specific crime had been laid to the charge of either, no witness could be cited to appear against them, neither could they be called upon for their defence. By one mode of conduct alone could the senate approve their zeal, and acquit themselves to the satisfaction of Tiberius. They did not long hesitate: after a short debate, a motion, made by one of the most forward of the partizans of Sejanus, was put and carried without opposition; by that resolution, AGRIP-

PINA

PINA AND NERO WERE DECLARED ENEMIES OF THE PUBLIC!

Agrippina was in some measure prepared for the blow, nor would pride permit her to sink beneath its weight: but the disappointment of her fond hopes with regard to Nero inflicted a more cruel wound. Since the death of Germanicus, these hopes had been her consolation in every sorrow, the solace of every affliction. Exile or imprisonment was now to be the fate of the dear youth to whose reign she had looked forward with exulting expectation. Had he had been harsh, undutiful, or disobedient, he would not thus have suffered! Filial piety was his only crime. He had been the support of his widowed mother, the comfort of her afflicted heart; and for this, for this alone he had incurred the hatred of Tiberius, who had been the relentless persecutor of her unfortunate race!

In those agitated moments Nero endeavoured to sustain the spirits of his mother,
by

by representing the probability of their soon beholding better days. The time, he said, would shortly come, when the Roman people, who were at present restrained by terror, would have an opportunity of declaring their sentiments, which he knew to be unalterably fixed in his favour. Till that period arrived, Sejanus might triumph. Exile might for the present be their fate; but their exile would be supported by hope, and softened by the exertions of filial duty and parental tenderness.

Agrippina listened to the affectionate remonstrances of her son in hopeless sorrow. She with anguish contrasted the conduct of Drusus with that of his deserving brother, and her knowledge of his having entered into the conspiracy which was formed for the ruin of those who ought to have been most dear to him, gave a peculiar bitterness to all that she at present suffered. Of her six children, it was from Nero alone that she derived any comfort,
and

and to him her fondness had proved fatal. The jealousy excited by her partiality had sown those seeds of discord which had been matured in the breast of Drusus into deadly hate; and in the anguish of her soul she now reflected that she had herself been instrumental in throwing her son into the arms of her enemies!

The reflections of Agrippina were not interrupted by the intrusion of visitors: she found herself abandoned and alone: day and night passed on, and no friend appeared: a dreary solitude reigned throughout the precincts of her palace, which seemed as if enveloped in pestilential vapours which none had courage to approach. The giddy multitude, whose ardent zeal had so lately burst forth with irresistible impetuosity, seemed as if by an enchantment to have been awed into silence. No murmur of indignation was heard. Subdued by the terrors which the proclamation of Tiberius had inspired, the Roman people

ple tamely acquiesced in the most flagrant violation of the rights of justice, and forsook in their calamity those whom they had so often vowed to cherish and support.

Among the domestics of the princess, those who had been corrupted by Livilla were now divided among themselves. While the most thoroughly depraved rejoiced in the prospect of their promised reward, others were seized with compunction for having betrayed their mistress, and in the anguish of their hearts intreated her forgiveness. By disclosing to her the whole of the infernal plan which had been laid for her destruction, they added another wound to those which already bled in her lacerated heart. Wherever she turned her eyes, she beheld only scenes of perfidy and wickedness. Behind her she saw triumphant malice deriding her calamities; before her the prospect was blasted by cruelty, and involved in darkness. In vain did the attendants, whose tried fidelity in-

vested

vested them with the rights of friendship, endeavour to soothe her perturbed spirits; in the violence of their affliction, which they found it impossible to conceal, she evidently saw that they considered her fate as already decided. Her daughters Drusilla and Julia caught from them the contagion of sorrow; and though incapable of forming any conception of the evils which so nearly threatened their unhappy mother, gave way to tears and lamentations. Agrippina made no effort to assuage their grief; their tenderness was the only balm which fate had left to allay the fever of her spirits. In weeping over her children she found some relief to agony, but was cautious how she indulged in feelings by which her fortitude might be diminished.

Thus passed three wretched days, every moment of which was loaded with anxiety. Nero continued with his mother, sometimes endeavouring to rouse her hopes, sometimes giving way to despair. Neither
attempted

attempted to escape from Rome ; nor is there any room to believe, that had such an attempt been made it would possibly have proved successful. Had they even contrived to elude the vigilance of the guards by whom the palace was surrounded, to what region could they direct their steps? Rome had spread its empire over the greater part of the civilized world ; and wherever the authority of Rome was acknowledged, its alliance courted, or its resentment feared, there Agrippina and her son would have found themselves subjected to the tyranny of Tiberius.

Agrippina beheld the sun of the third day set in darkness. Her daughters had retired to rest ; silence reigned in the palace, and exhausted nature was at length inclined to seek relief in sleep. Scarcely had her eyes been sealed in slumber, when one of the female slaves rushed into her chamber, exclaiming with horror that the soldiers were at the gate! Agrippina
started

started up at the sound. She had no time for recollection; the cries and lamentations of her domestics gave her a confused idea of what was probably passing in the apartment of Nero; and regardless of herself she flew to save or perish with her son.

At the door of her chamber she was met by the ruffian whom Tiberius had selected for the leader of the band; a wretch, whose ferocious countenance shewed him worthy of the post he filled. At sight of this man Agrippina saw that her doom was fixed. Collecting all the force of her mind, she determined to meet her fate with a fortitude becoming the character she had through life supported, and with dignified composure commanded the centurion to inform her of what nature were the orders he had received? The ruffian, without deigning to reply, gave the signal to his men, who, rudely grasping the arms of the princess, loaded them with the heavy chains made for the meanest of criminals; fetters

fetters of the same description were screwed upon her feet. The sensations which her mind experienced during this transaction, a lively imagination may perhaps conceive, but by no pen can they possibly be described.

Deeply as she was affected, her unconquered spirit subdued the weakness of her swelling heart. To complain would have been to acknowledge the triumph of Tiberius: she therefore disdained complaint; no sigh, no tear betrayed the anguish of her soul. Without a struggle she permitted herself to be borne in the arms of the men whom she believed to be her appointed executioners, to the litter which waited for her at her palace gate. The apartments through which she passed were filled with soldiers; but though no domestic was permitted to appear, she distinctly heard the sobs and groans which issued from their hearts, and echoed through the interior of the building.

The close litter into which she was thrown instantly moved off, she knew not

in what direction: nor was it to her a matter of any moment where her wretched days should close; all that she now wished was their speedy termination. Now that she was free from observation, the support that her spirits had derived from the feelings of indignant pride forsook her mind; suffering nature sought relief, and in tears and lamentations she eased the oppressive burthen of her sorrow. Through the openings in the top of the litter she perceived the approach of morning, but the return of day brought no mitigation of her sufferings. Ignorant of the fate of her son, she knew not whether she was not now surrounded by his murderers, nor was the horrid image which this idea presented to her imagination to be reckoned among the least of her present torments.

Nero, who had been seized in the same moment with Agrippina, had been treated in a manner equally brutal. The litter in
which

which he was carried immediately followed hers, but so closely were both carriages constructed, that no object could be seen from either. No sound was heard, save the trampling of the mules upon the pavement, or from time to time the voices of the guards, denouncing vengeance on whoever dared to approach, or even to gaze from a distance on the party. Appalled by the threats of the soldiers, the people every where retired : but the misery which no eye was suffered to behold, made the deeper impression upon every heart. All were struck with astonishment at the cruel indignity offered to persons of their illustrious rank ; while those more particularly attached to the house of Germanicus mingled their ejaculations of horror and amazement with imprecations and vows of vengeance.

Shut up in an airless vehicle, which permitted her not to seek relief from change of posture, and galled by the heavy irons which encircled her tender limbs, the bodily

dily sufferings of Agrippina were dreadful, but they were far surpassed by the anguish of her mind. Of all the pains she now endured, none was to her more intolerable than the idea of being thus carried about through the Roman territories, as if to grace the triumph of her foes. She felt that Tiberius, in making her misery a spectacle, aimed at a refinement in malice; and while he exulted in her wretchedness, took pleasure in making a display of it to the people, by whom he knew her to have been ever revered and beloved.

Agrippina was too well acquainted with the emperor's character to make an erroneous judgment concerning the motives by which he was now influenced. No sooner had he heard of the infamous decree which terror had extorted from the senate, than he selected from all the plans of cruelty on which his gloomy imagination revelled, that which appeared most likely to afford to vengeance the delight of a long protracted

tracted feast. That desire of happiness which nature has implanted in the human breast as the great spring of action, impelled him to the execution of his infernal purpose; and in the vain hope of finding in the gratification of malignity some alleviation of the torments which incessantly preyed upon his heart, he ordered Agrippina to be brought to a place within his view. The spot he had chosen for this purpose was a castle in the vicinity of Herculaneum, exactly opposite to the island of Caprea, from which it could be distinctly seen. Taking his station on a promontory which commanded the coast, he waited with anxiety for the signal flag, which was to notify the arrival of the state prisoners at the castle, and when he at length beheld it waving in the air, felt a short-lived transport of delight. The idea of Agrippina's high spirit subdued by misery, or maddening in the agony of impotent resentment, afforded a glut of satisfaction

to

to his heart; but quickly does the joy of the wicked perish! The increased fever of his mind gave an additional sharpness to the pangs of conscience; and while he triumphed in the success of his malignity, he was filled with terrors and anxieties, which incessantly agitated his spirit, and deprived his soul of rest. The sight of Agrippina's prison could no longer afford delight. He turned from it in disgust, determined to prepare for himself a new gratification, by inflicting an additional load of misery on those whom his propitious stars had now put so completely in his power.

In a disposition in which the most trivial occurrence was sufficient to irritate his passions, and to betray the horrors which preyed upon his heart, Tiberius descended from the rock, and took the way to his house. He was now alone, and though he abhorred society, solitude filled him with alarm; great, therefore, was his terror, on beholding a person making towards

him with uncommon speed, and which ever way he turned following his steps, and gaining ground upon him too fast to leave him any hope of escape. He trembled; the agitation of his mind would not permit him to proceed. Sternly eyeing the suspected traitor, he to his great relief beheld, instead of a ferocious assassin, a simple fisherman, who approached with the utmost respect, and on his knees presented the fruit of his morning's labour, a barbel of uncommon size; which, as it was a species of fish in much request for the emperor's table, he thought himself fortunate in having thus opportunely caught, and made no doubt of receiving a handsome reward. Tiberius, enraged at the intrusion, suddenly desired the man to follow him, and passed on, till meeting with some of his people, he stopped, and ordered them to secure the fisherman, and chastise him for his insolence by rubbing his face with his own barbel. The poor fellow was obliged

to submit; and after having had his weather-beaten countenance besmeared with the slimy substance, he with some humour thanked his stars that he had not brought with him a large crab which he had likewise taken on the same morning! The expression did not escape the ears of the emperor; he ordered the crab to be instantly brought, and with the claws and edge of the shell cut and mangled every feature of the poor wretch's face.* To such mean acts of vengeance was he impelled by the tyranny of those vindictive passions which reigned in his perturbed breast!

Agrippina, in the midst of all her sufferings, was comparatively happy; stranger to remorse, and preserving in every situation a high sense of what was due to her own character and dignity, it was not in the power of Tiberius to degrade her mind, or to deprive it of the consciousness of ex-

* Suetonius, in relating this incident, refers it to an earlier date.

alted worth. In casting her eyes upon Caprea, she instantly comprehended the reason of her being brought within reach of the tyrant's view. She saw that it was his intention to mortify her by the knowledge of being under the immediate eye of those to whom her misery afforded subject of joy and exultation; and considering every sigh she breathed as a grateful tribute to her enemies, she resolved to suppress every expression of feeling, and to sustain with undaunted firmness all that malice could inflict.

Many were the painful emotions which the view of Caprea excited in the bosom of this unhappy princess. There Tiberius, after having obtained all the desires of his heart in the destruction of those he hated, revelled in delight. He dwelt in security, the favourite of the gods; his will was law; his every wish was gratified; and her misery now filled his cup of bliss! There too Sejanus triumphed—the proud,
the

the detested Sejanus! He and Livilla might now gratify their malice, by viewing from their stately porticos the walls of her dismal prison. Perhaps her son, her once-loved child, made a party in their revels! Drusus from Caprea beheld unmoved the dreary dwelling where his mother pined in solitude and grief: the malice of the others could only excite her indignation; it was his unkindness that pierced her soul.

Far worse than the pangs she had endured at his birth, were those she now suffered from the cruel desertion of this unworthy son. Short did the time appear since he had hung an helpless infant at her breast; in the mother's memory each endearing smile was fondly registered, nor did a grace of infancy escape her recollection. The anxieties he had caused in sickness or in absence, the hope he had inspired, or the joy he had imparted, all was now recalled to mind, as an aggravation of sorrow. As the mother of mankind bewailed her first-born

born son, whose ruthless passions first besprinkled the earth with human blood, so did Agrippina now mourn over the conduct of Drusus. He, like Cain, had lifted his hand against his brother; and she, like Eve, remembered, that however guilty, however miserable, he was still the offspring of her womb, the child she had nurtured in her bosom!

Although it would not have suited the malignant views of Tiberius to permit to Agrippina and Nero such comfort as would have been derived from enjoying the melancholy privilege of unburthening their sorrows in conversation with each other, they soon discovered that they were lodged in the same prison. How Nero supported himself under the rigour of his fate is unknown; he however, in the mildness of his temper, and the sanguine spirits of youth, possessed some advantage over his unhappy mother. Her feelings of the present were more acute, her hopes in regard

to the future less vigorous; yet did she not permit her fortitude to be shaken, nor did she by any indication of fear betray a weakness unworthy of her birth or character. Deprived of all the appendages of greatness; no longer surrounded by a train of obsequious domestics; no longer approached with reverence, nor treated with any degree of that respect to which she had from infancy been accustomed; in chains and in solitude; she forgot not that she was the grand-daughter of an emperor, and widow of the best and bravest of men.

It is asserted by the historian of "The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," that as "female fortitude is commonly artificial, so it is seldom steady or consistent."* Agrippina is one of the many thousand instances which may be adduced as proof that the assertion is unfounded, and the conclusion false. Active courage belongs not to the female character; when it oc-

* Gibbon, vol. ii. 8vo. edit. p. 43. curs,

curs, it is an exertion beyond the strength, and may therefore deserve the epithet of artificial; but the nobler virtue of enduring fortitude seems to be the gift with which nature has peculiarly endowed the sex. To the unshaken fortitude which women have often displayed in the hour of trial, ancient and modern history bear witness. In public life, and still more in its retired scenes, have the greatest sufferings been magnanimously supported by the female mind; nor are there many instances upon record, of fear having produced a base desertion of principle in the minds of the most fearful. Rather than betray the friends who trusted in them, or injure the cause in which they had engaged, pain has been endured without repining, and death embraced with cheerfulness. Few have, like Zenobia, meanly endeavoured to save themselves at the expence of every sacred tie of honour; and though the tone of Agrippina's mind possessed an unusual degree of firmness, the
intrepidity

intrepidity with which she bore her misfortunes, is less remarkable, because less rare, than the base cowardice of the Syrian queen.

Tiberius was enraged to find that his hopes of subduing Agrippina's mind were likely to be disappointed. Her spirit was still unconquered; and the more she manifested of that greatness of soul, which he considered as an assertion of superiority, the more was he exasperated against her. Inspired by the mean jealousy which is congenial with little minds, he had on all occasions proclaimed his sovereign contempt for the sex; nor could he now endure to behold in a woman the display of that magnanimous resolution to which it was, in his opinion, unpardonable presumption in any woman to aspire. Enraged that Agrippina would not submit to be despised, he resolved to take the step most likely to drive her to despair. Nero was sent off in chains to the isle of Pontia, nor could the fond mother

mother hope that her eyes were ever more to be gladdened by the presence of her darling son.

In losing Nero, Agrippina lost every motive which could operate as a restraint upon her feelings. The tyrant could do no more. She might now bid defiance to his malice, and cared not how soon she provoked him to inflict that death to which she looked as a deliverance. Her expressions of resentment were therefore no longer guarded by any prudential consideration. She openly exclaimed against the savage cruelty of the emperor. She recapitulated his crimes, and by venting her indignation against the author of her misfortunes endeavoured to relieve the agony of her heart. The brutal centurion saw with pleasure the opportunity which was thus afforded him of executing the commission he had received from Tiberius; with the insolence of a mean and vulgar mind he mocked her passion, and reminded her

her that he had the power to punish her temerity. Agrippina disdained to make any other reply to his words than by a look of scorn, which he no sooner perceived, than he lifted his audacious hand and struck her on the face. The blow was violent, and so well had the wretch taken his aim, that it proved instantly fatal to one of her eyes, which was wrenched from the socket by the stroke.

The agonising torture of the wound might possibly for a time suspend the power of recollection; but no sooner were her senses restored, than the miserable Agrippina resolved by death to prevent the repetition of any personal insult. Abstinence was the only means by which she could effect her purpose: she therefore with determined resolution refused to taste of food, and having calculated on the time that would be necessary to extinguish the vital principle by this slow mode of self-destruction,

destruction, consoled herself with looking towards the period of her release.

Tiberius had scarcely tasted of the pleasure which the savage brutality of the centurion had afforded his obdurate heart, ere he was alarmed by the apprehension of losing, by Agrippina's death, the enjoyment which he had promised to his heart in her protracted sufferings. He determined that she should not thus elude his vengeance. Strict orders were immediately issued to those who had the charge of her person to save her life, at the peril of their own. The orders were punctually obeyed: in spite of her struggles and resistance, food was forced down her throat; her miserable existence was prolonged; and Tiberius had the cruel satisfaction of forcing her to live in all the anguish of slow consuming pain.

How she endured the accumulated sufferings under which she groaned, is indeed astonishing. To her high spirit, the least
of

of all the evils she now was doomed to bear, would have appeared intolerable in prospect, and yet their united force did not cut the thread of life. She was destitute of every support, but that of innocence; uncheered by any hope, save that which arose from the prospect of being survived by a spotless reputation. These, however, failed not to be the solace of her prison hours, and were the probable means of enabling her to drag on her melancholy existence.

In the view of Agrippina's prison, Tiberius had expected to find a never-failing source of satisfaction. But the wickedness of his heart had deceived him. The idea of her being so near to him was now intolerable; and as her image incessantly haunted his imagination, and never presented itself without awakening the scorpion stings of conscience, he thought that by removing her to a distance, he should, while he still enjoyed the idea of her

her sufferings, lose the agitation which was occasioned by her immediate vicinity. The destruction of her happiness was now accomplished; but as no shaft of malice had been able to wound her character, his triumph was but half complete. This reflection sunk deep into his heart, and the anguish of disappointed rage deprived him of the refreshment of sleep, and added so much to the ferocity of his temper, as to render him terrible to all who approached him.

Of all the schemes that presented themselves to his infernal mind for sullyng the spotless fame of Agrippina, none appeared upon examination practicable. As a wife, she had been a pattern of fidelity and affection; as a widow, she had conducted herself with undeviating propriety and decorum. Her conduct had in every situation been equally pure and irreproachable; nor on a retrospect of her life, could a moment of levity be found, which had left an unguarded opening for the attack of calumny.

The

The guilt which could not be imputed, might however, by a master-stroke of policy, be inferred. By banishing her to the island of Pandataria, where her wretched mother had been so long confined, Tiberius flattered himself it might be possible to make the world believe, that there was the same similarity in their crimes as in their punishment; and though this by no means answered the depth of his malignity, it was the only method he could devise of throwing a slur upon a character which he knew to be purity itself.

Agrippina, deprived of sight, and sinking under the double load of pain and sorrow, was thrown on board a paltry vessel, which Tiberius with barbarous joy beheld set sail for Pandataria. Never since the death of Germanicus had she embarked from any port of Italy. How striking was the contrast! Instead of the acclamations of admiring crowds, the only sound that now assailed her ears was the coarse
ribaldry

ribaldry of her savage guards. Instead of the kind adieus of affectionate friends, whom zeal and gratitude had ever led in numbers to convoy her to the shore, she received the muttering curses of a fierce banditti, who went with reluctance on a service which was to deprive them of the gross pleasures they had enjoyed in the voluptuous capital. Instead of the tender attentions of a beloved husband, she was now to receive the commands of the brutal wretch from whom she had already received the cruelest of insults. Surely if mental suffering could reach the springs of life, Agrippina had never survived this miserable voyage!

Could her woes have admitted of aggravation, her feelings of wretchedness would have been increased by the melancholy which reigned in the barren island that was destined for her residence. Every object reminded her of her unhappy parent, whose bones were there consigned to an ignoble grave.

grave. Over these Agrippina no doubt shed tears of bitterness; but in contemplating the spot where Julia mouldered in the dust, she derived the only consolation of which her misery would now admit—the consolation of reflecting that the hour of death, however its approach might be retarded by the natural vigour of the constitution, must at length arrive; and that the time *must* come, when she too should find repose, “where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest.”

If the injury which her sight had sustained from the loss of one of the visual orbs, permitted her to obtain a view of the adjacent isle of Pontia, the idea of her vicinity to Nero could not fail to affect her heart. Concerning his fate she could now entertain no hope, excepting what arose from a possibility of the tyrant’s death; for too well did she know the relentless nature of his heart, to expect that it would ever soften towards one he had so greatly injured.

jured. Before the first lingering year had closed, even this latent hope was lost; and she felt that notwithstanding all she had endured, she had, in the idea of Nero's safety, been saved from the acmé of misery and despair. By Nero's death her cup of sorrow was completely filled. The scene of futurity was now shut in darkness, and we can only hope that the excess of grief might produce a state of torpours, such as would render her in some degree insensible to the miseries of her situation.

By the imprisonment of Nero, Sejanus had seen his plans of ambition in a fair way of being accomplished; but while the prince was permitted to live, he could have no security of their being ultimately successful. He therefore lost no opportunity of instigating Tiberius to the murder of his grandson, which he represented as a measure necessary to his own safety. Nor did Tiberius stand in need of much persuasion to urge him to the cruel deed.

A centurion

A centurion, probably the same that had been employed to execute his ferocious vengeance on Agrippina, was dispatched to the isle of Pontia, with orders to pass himself for an officer bearing the commission of the senate whose pretended decree he was to execute. This man, paying a willing obedience to the commands of his cruel master, arrived at Pontia, and in the character he had been directed to assume, gave Nero notice of his approaching fate.

Every thing was prepared for the execution—the instruments of death were displayed—all was arranged in terrible array before him. To the son of Germanicus no means remained of saving himself from the ignominy of perishing by the executioner, but that of seeking death from his own hand. How he accomplished his design has not been fully explained. The above is the account that was given at Rome of the black transaction; and no sooner was it spread through the city, than
it

it occasioned a deep and universal sensation of sorrow and regret.

Of all the sons of Germanicus, Nero had been most universally beloved. It was he alone who, by the graces of his person and the elegance of his manners, recalled to the memory of men an image of his father. His death brought back the recollection of his father's virtues, and his father's wrongs: and the people, though they had been restrained by their fears from openly espousing the cause of innocence against the tyrant by whom it had been oppressed, secretly uttered the bitterest execrations of their hearts. Tiberius did not hear their curses, but from the open display that was made of grief, he was well assured he did not escape the censure and detestation which his crimes so well deserved. Though callous to the feelings of compunction and remorse, he was not insensible to the opinion of the world; and as pride prevented him from being at any
pains

pains to conciliate the esteem or good-will of his fellow-creatures, by imposing a restraint upon his malignant passions, the consciousness of being hated served to augment their fury.

It would be highly improper in a Christian writer, to close an account of the transactions of the present year, without mentioning that it has by many writers been assigned as the æra of the most memorable event that men or angels were ever called to witness.

For hundreds of years had the character of Tiberius been foretold in the books of prophecy, where he is described as “ a monarch of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences,* who should destroy, and practise to destroy the mighty ; and through his policy cause craft to prosper ; and should magnify himself in his heart, and in peace should destroy

* Probably alluding to his pretended skill in astrology, on which he greatly piqued himself.

many;

many; he (it was declared) should also stand up against the Prince of princes!"† The prophecy was now fulfilled. At the tribunal of the proconsul of Tiberius, JESUS CHRIST was condemned to the death of the cross. Tiberius, who had so often made innocence suffer, was the ostensible judge of the Saviour of the world, for in his name was the iniquitous decree of Pilate pronounced!

As most of the proconsular governments were now filled by the creatures of Sejanus, it is probable that Pontius Pilate owed his exaltation to him. He was not however, like Sejanus, so hardened as to commit cruelty and injustice without remorse. Tho' in order to gratify the rancour of the prejudiced multitude, he meanly submitted to act against the dictates of his conscience, he publicly attested the innocence of the person he condemned; and fearing that the blood of the just should bring down the

† See Daniel viii. 23, 24, 25.

judgment of the gods upon his guilty head, he, by a solemn ablution, endeavoured to avert from himself the punishment which he believed would follow such a crime.

The conduct of the legionary soldiers to one who, according to the attestation of their Roman governor, was innocent of the crimes laid to his charge, affords sufficient proof of the ferocity of their manners, and the delight they took in the exercise of cruelty. Yet even these men, whose hearts were hardened in the school of blood, did not see unmoved the awful scene that was exhibited on Calvary. The centurion, who had at least licensed, if he had not promoted, the insults that were offered to the blessed JESUS by the men under his command, stood with them near the cross, while they derided his sufferings, which, as crucifixion was the death allotted to slaves and criminals of the lowest order, excited no pity in their breasts. In such spectacles they had been accustomed to
take

take delight; but soon did their sentiments undergo a change; emotions never before experienced touched their hearts. While lost in astonishment at a display of magnanimity such as they had never seen exemplified in human character, the consciousness of their former unworthy opinion of the dignified sufferer inspired them with a deeper and more reverential awe. As they gazed in admiration, the sun withdrew its light; thick clouds of darkness filled the air; the object on which they had fixed their eyes was veiled in obscurity; but the voice that was sent forth sunk into their inmost souls. It is not surprising that at that awful moment, men who had never before felt a devotional impulse should have glorified God! The centurion was not ashamed to confess conviction: "after he saw the things which had passed, he said, Certainly this was a righteous person; truly this was the Son of God."*

* See Note L.

The provision made by Providence for the spread of the Gospel, in making the Romans (who were strangers to the law, and aliens to the commonwealth of Israel) witnesses of the Messiah's death, is sufficiently remarkable. When the law was promulgated from Sinai, Jews alone were spectators of the solemn scene; but now that the partition-wall, which had divided the Gentile and the Jew, was to be thrown down, and all the faithful out of every kindred and people to be gathered into one, a greater degree of publicity was necessary. The Romans were not only to be spectators of the death of Christ, but witnesses of his resurrection: the jealous suspicions of the Jewish rulers were rendered instrumental towards this important purpose. At the request of the Jews, the heathen soldiers of Tiberius were appointed to guard the massy sepulchre, where the body of him they had seen crucified was laid. In the performance of their duty, they

they were called to the privilege of beholding the most interesting spectacle which was ever presented to the eye of man: they saw the Saviour of the world burst the bands of death! They heard the glorious messenger of the LORD, who came down from heaven, pronounce the gracious encouragement, "FEAR NOT YE!" to the humble but faithful friends of JESUS—words which shed a ray of light over the darkest hours of human destiny! words which have changed the nature of human events, transforming adversity into a blessing, and making the wisdom of this world foolishness! While Tiberius, the creature of a moment, whose lengthened reign is but a speck in the annals of time, was exercising his power in spreading terror and desolation, the messenger of the MOST HIGH announced to the righteous the tidings of everlasting joy! In the resurrection of CHRIST, such full assurances were given of a future state, as should thenceforth

forth render the transitory ills of life only
dust in the balance! By it death was di-
vested of its terrors! by it the grave was
denied the triumph of an everlasting victory!

CHAPTER IX.

ÆMILIA LEPIDA, the Wife of the younger DRUSUS, seduced by SEJANUS; she falsely accuses her Husband.—DRUSUS cast into Prison.—The Emperor begins to be jealous of SEJANUS; plots his Destruction.—SEJANUS betrayed, and put to Death; cruelty of the Magistrates to his Children.—History of the Murder of DRUSUS revealed by APICATA.—Execution of LIVILLA and her Associates.—TIBERIUS increases in Wickedness and Misery.—Occurrences at Rome.—Death of DRUSUS.—Death of AGRIPPINA.—Conclusion.

A. D. 30—33.

NO sooner had Sejanus effected the destruction of Nero and his mother, than he began to lay snares for the unfortunate Drusus, who, much as he had been to blame in suffering himself to be drawn into

into the conspiracy against his brother, was not so hardened as to be destitute of compunction and remorse. He reflected with bitter regret upon the part he had acted; and willing to alleviate the anguish of self-reproach, by throwing the guilt upon others, he spoke with resentment of the artifices which had been made use of in order to exasperate him against his brother. His wife did not escape her share of censure: in the heat of passion he accused her of having entered with unbecoming warmth into the interests of Sejanus, and of having shewn indecent joy at the misfortunes of Agrippina, who was in every respect her superior.

The pride of *Æmilia Lepida* took fire; and instead of endeavouring to soothe the distressed mind of her husband, she complained to Sejanus of his unreasonableness and cruelty, bemoaning her unhappy fate in being united to a man possessed of such a violent spirit. Sejanus did not lose the
 opportunity

opportunity which thus offered, of insinuating himself into the good graces of Æmilia. Her pride, her levity, and want of principle, all combined to encourage him in the prosecution of his plan of villainy; nor was he long in triumphing over the honour of this weak and unworthy woman. No sooner had he succeeded in his scheme of seduction, than he found it easy to increase the resentment she had conceived against her husband into deep and implacable hatred. Drusus was now odious in her eyes: and as she soon discovered that Sejanus considered him not only as a rival in love, but as a competitor in the favour of Tiberius, she had a double cause of aversion. She was easily persuaded to believe, that if Drusus was removed, nothing could prevent her marriage with Sejanus, nor his accession to the imperial dignity; Drusus was therefore beheld not only as a jealous spy upon her actions, but as an obstacle in the way of her preferment.

When

When Æmilia's mind had been sufficiently prepared to work his purpose, Sejanus proceeded to unfold his views, and boldly pointed out the road that must be taken to attain the object of their wishes. The same means that had been employed in the murder of the uncle, might have been resorted to for the destruction of the nephew, had not the youth and vigorous constitution of the younger Drusus, rendered the perpetrators less hopeless of escaping detection. A safer course was therefore to be pursued; and the malice which Tiberius was known to bear to all the children of Germanicus, cleared it from every difficulty.

Æmilia, with seeming reluctance, informed the emperor, that her husband had participated in all the crimes which had been imputed to Nero and Agrippina; that his intentions were treacherous; and that he had resolved the death of Nero should not go unrevenged. Sejanus, on being informed

informed of *Æmilia's* accusation of her husband, affected to disbelieve the charge. He was not, however, long in changing his tone; unwilling as he professed himself to be to listen to any thing against *Drusus*, he was at length convinced that it was for the safety of *Tiberius* to dismiss from his presence one, who, if he harboured traitorous designs, did not want courage to perpetrate them.

The emperor either was, or pretended to be, dismayed by the proofs that were brought him of his grand-son's disloyalty: he did not, however, take any means of investigating the truth of the allegations, but without giving *Drusus* any opportunity of justifying his innocence, ordered him instantly to depart for Rome: there, after the farce of a public accusation, he was by the emperor's orders confined in an apartment in the lower part of the palace, under a strict guard, who had it in orders to note down every word he uttered,

and

and to pry into his secret thoughts. Whether he in bitterness of heart accused himself for having ever joined in league with the wicked, or whether he vented his indignation against his treacherous betrayers, all was alike construed into matter of offence. Day after day increased the rigour of his imprisonment, and the lingering foot of time, as it slowly paced the round of the seasons, brought no mitigation of his sorrows. Shut out from the world, he had not even the consolation of knowing that his arch enemy had been overtaken by the hand of justice; and that Sejanus, in accomplishing his ruin, had been laying the foundation of his own destruction.

Whilst the proud heart of Sejanus was exulting in the success which had attended all his well-laid schemes, a success which he solely attributed to the superior wisdom and dexterity with which they had been conceived and executed; he little thought that every action had been watched, and

every motive penetrated, by the jealous eye of his suspicious master.

In his anxiety to destroy those who were the objects of his hatred, Tiberius had gladly availed himself of the ardent zeal of Sejanus; but no sooner did he see that zeal to be unfeigned, than he began to suspect the motives from which it sprung. Conscious that he possessed not one quality which could conciliate affection, one virtue which could create esteem, he knew that self-interest was the only bond by which any human creature could be tied to him. Where his will was known, the minister who depended on his favour would undoubtedly assume the appearance of zeal in putting it in execution; and this sufficiently accounted for the alacrity with which the favourite had prosecuted the destruction of Agrippina and her elder son. But whence arose his desire of removing Drusus? Whence, but from the audacious hopes inspired by his own ambition!

From

From the moment that this idea took possession of his mind, Tiberius resolved to watch every step with the most vigilant attention; and while he did so, to take such measures as were best calculated to elate the hopes and expand the views of his proud dependent. In his letters to the senate, he called him “his best friend; the faithful minister, by whose vigilance the public peace was secured, and the glory of the empire maintained in its highest lustre.” Every day he added some new dignity to those he had already bestowed with lavish hand; and knowing that prosperity is the surest discoverer of the human heart, determined to overwhelm him with a load of grandeur. For this purpose he now, of his own accord, proposed to unite him to his daughter-in-law Livilla, which, from the sollicitations he had formerly on that head received, he knew to be the most acceptable mode by which he could testify his desire of gratifying all his wishes.

No

No sooner did Sejanus receive a hint of the emperor's intentions, than all his promises to Æmilia Lepida were forgotten. To this arch deceiver she had sold her soul in vain. In vain had she yielded up her honour and her husband's life, as the purchase of future greatness—in vain had she trusted to her youth and beauty for securing the prize—the man she had considered as the slave of her charms, made a mock of her credulity; and though the aunt and the niece were in his eyes equally despised, the superior rank and dignity of the former ensured her the fidelity of a man who made every thing yield to his ambition. Æmilia Lepida was sent home to her father; and the haughty favourite, in his union with the daughter-in-law of the emperor, saw himself at length exalted to the station to which he had so long aspired in vain.

Sejanus was, as the emperor had foreseen, intoxicated by this torrent of prosperity. Congratulatory addresses from the senate,

senate, conceived in terms of fulsome adulation, appeared to him as an incense due to his pre-eminence. In the forum, in the temples, and in private houses, his statues were placed beside those of the gods. He already considered himself as at the head of the empire, and saw the sovereign power within his grasp. The emperor, willing to carry on the delusion, seemed more and more inclined to relinquish to him the cares of government; but being in constant terror lest an attempt should be made against his life, resolved, under a pretence of doing him honour, to remove him to a greater distance. In order to effect this, he notified his intention of making Sejanus joint consul with himself for the ensuing year.

Sovereign splendour fell short of that with which Sejanus made his entry into the city of Rome. Awed by fears, or impelled by hopes, which were alike the corrupt offspring of depraved affections, the nobility

lity of Rome bowed before the minister of Tiberius, in whom they considered the imperial authority to be already vested. He was approached with the respect due to a monarch, and addressed in a language little short of adoration; nor were those who wished to court his favour, ashamed of prostrating themselves before the statues of this visible deity, nor when the sound of his voice reached their ears, of exclaiming with the flatterers of Herod, “it is the voice of a God!”

Tiberius, in order to be certain of having a true and faithful account of all that passed, was obliged to apply to a person of integrity. It was not in any of the tribe of informers or of malicious incendiaries that he could now depend. When he found it necessary to repose confidence, Tiberius was compelled to pay an involuntary tribute to virtue. The character of the prefect of Rome pointed him out as the person best qualified for discharging
a trust

a trust that required the exertion of firmness, as he possessed the principles of truth and honour. To him therefore did Tiberius now apply, and from him he received the most punctual and exact intelligence concerning all that particularly belonged to his department, which included whatever concerned the real safety of the emperor's person or government.

It might have been expected, that Sejanus would from the gratification of his wishes have experienced such a degree of satisfaction, as might have filled him with complacency, and rendered him willing to confer on others a taste of the happiness he himself so fully enjoyed. But when the heart of pride rejoices in the possession of power, it tramples on mercy, and spurns the suggestions of benevolence. It was not sufficient that he enjoyed authority, unless he could make the weight of his authority to be felt. Honoured, flattered, and caressed as he now was, there were
still

still some who scorned to bend with that submission which could alone conciliate his favour ; and even among those who were now foremost in paying their court, there were many from whom he had formerly received slights and insults. Both these descriptions of persons were now marked for vengeance ; and heavily did the vengeance of Sejanus fall : nor did Tiberius interpose to save any, even of the most deserving of those whom the proud consul had doomed to perish. Besides his natural antipathy to the virtuous, he had now an additional motive for permitting their destruction, as he saw that by it the public detestation would at length be brought upon Sejanus.

The minister depended on the servile acquiescence of the senate to whatever measure he thought proper to propose ; and knew that, in their present degraded state, they would neither scan the justice of decrees directed against the innocent,

nor

nor resent the injury done to individuals as an insult upon their order. They indeed permitted Sejanus to proceed in the career of cruelty without remonstrance or control: and when they viewed the empty benches which reminded them of the fate of those who had fallen under the displeasure of the consul, (each selfish soul rejoicing that the lot had not been his) they redoubled their assiduity to please and gratify their mighty lord.

Amongst the most illustrious of those who suffered in the short consulship of Sejanus, was Geminus Rufus, a man who, like Mordecai the Jew, had obstinately refused to bow before the haughty favourite, or to rise up to do him honour. The pride of Sejanus was not less than that of Haman, nor was it to be more easily appeased: Rufus and his wife were both charged with the crime of violated majesty before the senate, where Rufus made a short but spirited defence, in which he

not

not only cleared himself from the imputation of disaffection, but evinced a more than common regard for the emperor, as he had by his will made him joint-heir with his own children. Having thrown the will upon the table, he indignantly retired; but scarcely had he reached his own home, when the messenger of the senate appeared to inform him that sentence against him had been pronounced. Rufus heard the message without dismay, and calmly drawing his sword, plunged it in his breast: "Behold," said he, "how a man of honour can die. Go, and report what you have seen to the senate;" so saying, he breathed his last!

Still the vengeance of Sejanus was unappeased. Prisca the wife of Rufus yet lived, and her spirit was known not to be inferior to that of her husband's. In the midst of her affliction for that husband's loss, she was dragged to the senate-house, to stand before the men who had made
her

her children fatherless, and herself a widow. She stood unpitied: or if any felt in beholding her a movement of compassion, they trembled with apprehension lest the feeling of humanity should be discovered, and imputed to them as a crime. They sternly began to interrogate her; but Prisca had not come there to answer interrogations. She came resolved to die: and when she saw that every eye was fixed upon her in expectation of a reply, she drew from beneath her robe the fatal dagger, and giving herself a mortal stab, expired on the spot.

Such were the scenes exhibited in the consulate of Sejanus, which, had it not been shortened by an artful manœuvre of Tiberius, would have been fatal to all but the avowed creatures of the minister.

No sooner were the new consuls installed in their office, than Tiberius began to found the public mind by exhibiting symptoms of returning kindness towards the family of Germanicus, and of occasional coolness to-
wards

wards Sejanus; who was not a little alarmed on hearing that Caligula had been sent for to Caprea, and treated with much affection. The emperor did not stop here. He wrote to the senate, warmly recommending the young prince to their protection, and requesting that they would invest him with the offices of augur and pontiff. In mentioning Sejanus, he no longer spoke of him in the language of panegyric, but blended hints of dislike with expressions of affection.

Sejanus, attributing to the effects of absence a change for which he had been little prepared, proposed returning to Caprea, vowing he could no longer bear to live in a state of separation from his dear master. The answer of Tiberius was couched in terms equally affectionate, and equally sincere: he declared “ that he also languished for a sight of his friend, but that the service of the state required that so able a minister should remain at Rome. In order, however, to soften the refusal,
he

he thought it necessary to add that he intended to visit Rome, where he should shortly have the pleasure of embracing his dear Sejanus!"

Sejanus was not to be deceived, but still he endeavoured to deceive the senate into a belief that he was higher than ever in the emperor's favour; and under this persuasion the fathers passed a vote, declaring that *his conduct in his magistracy was a model for all future consuls!*

Tiberius saw that it was necessary to make himself more plainly understood; but so deeply rooted were his habits of dissimulation, that he could not prevail upon himself to throw off the mask, and openly declare that he had detected, and resolved to punish, the man who had abused his favour. He continued to act with that mysterious policy which he had long mistaken for wisdom; and it was only by hints and insinuations that he gave the world to understand that his affections were alienated

nated from his minister. But Sejanus saw through the thin disguise; and believing his fate to be determined, resolved by one desperate push to make himself master of the empire. He soon formed a conspiracy, which was entered into with avidity by all who held their fortunes in dependence upon him, or who hoped to rise through his means to greater preferment.

Of these men, one Satrius Secundus, whom he had upon many occasions employed as an instrument in the ruin of others, was the highest in his favour and confidence. The betrayer of Cremutius Cordus, the historian,* was a very fit person to be employed in seditious conspiracy; but Sejanus did not consider that a man who had been accustomed to perfidy, might prove perfidious even to his own guilty associates. Satrius had been so long in the trade of an informer, that treachery had become a constant habit of his mind;

* See p. III of this volume.

and

and no sooner did he find Sejanus in his power, than he began to consider how he might turn the confidence reposed in him to the best advantage. After some consideration he determined to lay before Antonia a full account of the whole conspiracy, and accordingly went to her house, requested an audience, and put her in possession of the names of the conspirators, and of every part of their plan.

Antonia lost no time; she instantly dispatched to Tiberius the particulars of all she had heard from Satrius; and took such measures as prudence suggested, for defeating the treasonable designs of him who had so often falsely attributed treason to the innocent.

Often as he had betrayed others, Sejanus had no suspicion of being himself betrayed. On the morning of the fifteenth of November he rose elate with the prospect of success. His levee was crowded with visitors, who eagerly pressed forward to congratulate

congratulate him on the letters which had just arrived from Caprea, in which the emperor had declared his intention of making him his associate in the tribunitian dignity. Sejanus received with extacy the news of an event, which, by putting him in present possession of imperial power, rendered it unnecessary to proceed in his hazardous and doubtful enterprize. Flushed with joy he dealt his smiles around, and attended by the prætorian guards, set off in great state for the senate-house, where, on entering the vestibule, he was met by Macro, to whom Tiberius had entrusted the execution of the counter-plot which he himself had planned. Macro, approaching him with profound respect, confirmed the tidings he had heard of his new honours; but told him that it was the will of the emperor that an event of such importance should be announced to him in form, and communicated to the fathers by the voice of the consuls. All
 who

who heard were; or pretended to be, in raptures at the happy event, which they declared had long been the object of their warmest wishes.

The pride of Sejanus was at length gratified; he walked with triumphant gaiety to his place in the senate-house, impatient to hear the contents of the important letter which the consul was now to read. The letter was of great length: it was leisurely unfolded by the consul; and Sejanus, all impatience, waited for the exordium, which was tedious, and written in language extremely embarrassed and confused. At length his name was mentioned, but not in terms such as he expected; again extraneous matter intervened, and again he was pointed at as guilty of some inexplicable offence! His colour changed: he looked around, and in the altered looks of the fathers saw that he was considered as a ruined man. Still the consul went on. The language of Tiberius now assumed

the tone of the bitterest invective: and at length, in plain terms, accused Sejanus of the foulest treason. The whole conspiracy was laid open; and the fathers were charged instantly to seize the traitors, to throw Sejanus into prison, and to execute immediate vengeance on two of the most guilty of his associates.

A thunder-bolt could not have more compleatly flunned Sejanus than this unexpected blow. The dear friends of his prosperity, who, on his entrance into the senate-house, had eagerly contended with each other for the honour of being next his person, flunk one by one away; but they went unnoticed and unseen; stupified by amazement, he heeded not their desertion; he observed not that he was left alone. Mortified pride, disappointed ambition, and conscious guilt, struck at once their ice-bolts in his soul, benumbed his faculties, and arrested the current of his blood. Pale and trembling, he sat with
his

his eyes fixed, without the capability of perception. He heard not the voice of the consul, who, in an authoritative tone, commanded him to rise and follow him to the prison. The command was thrice repeated with menaces, before Sejanus could be made to comprehend that it was now his part to obey. He at length rose, was loaded with irons, and, attended by the very magistrates whom he had himself promoted to their present office, was conveyed to the dungeon where he was destined to finish his career.

Sejanus soon heard the shouts of joy which the news of his fall drew forth from the exulting populace. Instead of any attempt to rescue him from his guards, (which had been with so much reason apprehended in the case of Agrippina) the people crowded round to enjoy the spectacle of his disgrace. They reminded him of his deeds of cruelty; they reviled him for his avarice and ambition; they derided
his

his pride; and bidding him behold the worship that was now paid to his statues, dashed them in pieces before his eyes.

In the recesses of his dungeon Sejanus at length found a refuge from the insults of the populace; that populace, which, but a few hours before, had, by their acclamations, swelled the triumph of his vanity, and seemed willing to kiss the dust beneath his feet.*

The executioners whom he had frequently employed to gratify his malice and revenge, now appeared as the ministers of retributive justice. By their hands he was strangled in the prison; and his body, after having been for three days drawn by the ferocious mob in ignominy through the streets of Rome, was thrown into the Tiber.

In the misfortunes of Sejanus no heart could sympathise. His licentious life, his unbounded ambition, his savage cruelty, and ever-arrogating pride, were too well

* Note M.

known

known, and had been too deeply felt, to permit any one to compassionate the sufferings which all considered as a punishment most justly due to crimes like his. But it is to be feared, that the awful lesson which the striking event ought to have enforced, did not sink deep into every heart. Many were convinced by his example that it was unsafe to rise to the pinnacle of greatness; but did any whose views were bounded by inferior objects, reflect that Sejanus had at one time aspired no higher than themselves; and that it was the seeds of the same passions which they cherished in their own bosoms, that had in his expanded into enormous crimes? Where was the Roman, who, on beholding the fate that pride had brought upon Sejanus, learned to cultivate the virtues of meekness and humility? where the favourite of fortune, who, on hearing the voice of adulation, and receiving the incense of flattery from an admiring world, stopped to reflect on the louder praise and deeper homage that had been

lately offered up to Sejanus, and despised the applause which was not reverberated by the voice of conscience? Happy they, if any such there were, who thus improved by the events of the passing moment! When they ascended in the wheel of fortune, they would be in no danger from the sudden elevation; when brought low by her vicissitudes, they would possess their souls in peace. Nor would the esteem they sought forsake them in the grave; since nothing is so imperishable as that perfume which embalms the memory of the virtuous.

Tiberius, unblest by the consciousness of being esteemed or loved by any human being, hating the human race, and dreading the enmity of all he hated, suffered at Caprea during these transactions all the tortures that terror and anxiety could inflict. From the moment that Macro was dispatched to Rome, he wandered up and down his vainly-blooming groves in a state of restless perturbation. His domestics, afraid

afraid to meet the glance of his red and fiery eye, shrunk from his presence; nor did even those whom he admitted to familiar intercourse, think it then safe to press him to the food which might have cheered, or to the sleep which might have refreshed him. As the appointed moment drew near, when the fatal letter was to be read to the fathers, his alarm increased.

Taking his station upon the jutting eminence of a sharp-pointed rock, he impatiently waited for the signals, which, according to agreement, were to be repeated along the coast at the moment that Sejanus breathed his last. The signals appeared! Sejanus was no more! Joy for a moment triumphed in the tyrant's heart; but as his information was as yet imperfect, he knew not what circumstances might have occurred to render the fall of Sejanus big with future evils. In the instructions given to Macro he had inserted a clause which he now feared might have been acted upon, and that

that Drusus, whom in case Sejanus had had it in his power to create an insurrection, he had ordered to be put at the head of the soldiers, might now be not only released from confinement, but placed in a situation of power and authority. This consideration quelled his joy, and kept him in suspense till the arrival of the messenger sent by the governor of Rome, from whom he learned that the death of the man whom he had so lately called his chosen friend, had been effected without opposition, and that the son of Germanicus was left to languish in his miserable dungeon.

Tiberius was himself so incapable of affection, that it is not likely he ever believed the attachment of Sejanus to have been such as it had been professed; but though he knew it to be founded on the sordid views of interest, he thought that even by selfishness it would have been rendered durable, if not sincere. His pride was wounded by the defection of the man whom
he

he had exalted, and whom he considered as bound to him by the ties of obligation, and allied by sympathy in malevolence. The gloom of his dark soul assumed from thenceforth a deeper shade; he shunned the sight of his fellow-creatures, and in fullen hatred of the world retired to one of his villas, where he remained in wretched solitude, refusing to admit the deputies sent by the senate, or even the consuls, to his presence; nor could they extort from him one sentiment of approbation for the alacrity they had evinced in obeying his commands.

Having too long forsaken the principles of honour and of justice to have any infallible guide of conduct, the fathers were at a loss to know how to proceed; but on its being suggested that the vengeance of the emperor had not yet been sufficiently gratified, they hastened to pass such decrees as they thought would effectually satisfy his vindictive spirit. The innocent relations
of

of Sejanus, among whom were some persons of merit, were all without a shadow of pretence condemned to die. The tender age of his unoffending children excited no pity; they were cruelly butchered by the hands of assassins, who, as they acted under the authority of the laws, only shared with their employers in the guilt of murder!

His wife Livilla, secure of protection from her rank, and little capable of those tender sentiments which are the genuine offspring of true affection, felt only the disappointment of ambition; but very different were the sensations experienced by the mother of his children, the injured Apicata, whom, in the commencement of his intrigue with Livilla, he had so unjustly repudiated. She, on hearing that her son and daughter had been dragged to prison, flew distracted with apprehension into the streets, where the first object that met her eye was the mangled corpse of her unfortunate son
thrown

thrown into the common charnel-house; and so dreadful was the shock which she received from the melancholy spectacle, that she resolved to quit a world of misery by putting an end to her own existence. Nor, however, would she bury in her grave the fatal secret which she had for seven years carried in her bosom. Shutting herself up in her apartment, she wrote a full and circumstantial account of all that had come to her knowledge concerning the murder of Drusus; and having sealed the packet, and dispatched it to Caprea by a faithful messenger, she with her own hands put a period to her life.

Tiberius was still in his sequestered villa, vainly endeavouring to quiet the miserable agitation of a rancorous heart in the indulgence of every vicious passion; when the memorial of Apicata roused him from the dream of sensuality, to all the horrors of the most furious rage. The death of Drusus he had borne without repining, and seemed
indeed

indeed to have been very little affected by the event; but very different were the feelings he now experienced, on finding that he had been imposed upon by those more artful than himself, and that he had for seven years been the dupe of his son's murderers. In his dispatches to the senate he demanded signal vengeance on all who had been concerned in perpetrating, or in abetting the perpetration of the horrid deed; and the fathers, who now for the first time saw the indignation of Tiberius accord with justice, zealously seconded his wishes. Eudemus the physician, and Lygdus the slave, who were both mentioned by Apicata as parties in the murder, were seized and put to the rack. They both confessed the crime, and agreed in their account of the manner in which it had been perpetrated. Livilla, whose hardened heart had long been divested of every apprehension; she who had so lately exulted in the success of all her schemes, and who, even
after

after the blow she had sustained in the loss of Sejanus, had wrapt herself in seclusion; now saw that the day of vengeance was arrived. Such pity as she had shewn to Drusus, when she triumphed in beholding the slow but certain operation of the deadly draught—such pity was now shewn to her. The stings of conscience, added to the excruciating pains of hunger, rendered her last hours far more miserable than those of her unfortunate husband; but famine at length exhausted the powers of nature, and the abandoned Livilla closed a life of levity and wickedness in ignominy and despair!

It might have been imagined that the discovery of the guilt and perfidy of Sejanus, would have opened the emperor's eyes with regard to the falshood of the charges he had brought against Agrippina and her sons. Sejanus was in fact as much the murderer of Nero, as of his uncle Drusus. Neither Nero, nor the son of Tiberius, could be recalled to life; but the brother of Nero
yet

yet lived: Agrippina's spirit still lingered in its habitation of wretchedness: why then did not the emperor hasten to repair, as far as it was in his power, to repair the injuries they had sustained? Why did he not, by restoring them to liberty, and the full enjoyment of all their rights, clear himself at once from the odium of having abetted Sejanus in his schemes of iniquity and injustice; and prove, that in what he had done he had acted from the malicious representations of his minister, and not from the malice of his own heart? Such undoubtedly would have been the conduct of a just or generous mind, on discovering that treachery had been practised to betray it into deeds of cruelty and injustice. But such was not the conduct of Tiberius. He indeed, in a memoir which he composed of his own life, had, as Suetonius expresses it, "*the effrontery to write, I have punished Sejanus, because I found him bent upon the destruction of the children of my son*"

son Germanicus;” but never did his implacable heart shew any symptom of relenting towards those whom he accuses Sejanus of wishing to destroy.

Instead of being touched with compassion or remorse, he with such persevering rancour continued to persecute those who had survived the persecution of his minister, as leaves no room to doubt where every act of cruelty had originated.

In order to account for an enmity so implacable, and so apparently without foundation, it is necessary to look back to that period when the virtues of a younger brother first engendered the passions of envy and jealousy in the tyrant’s mind. The partiality of his mother had left no wish ungratified; yet in the consciousness that his brother was more deserving of esteem, Tiberius had been rendered miserable. The popularity which attended Drusus, his happiness in his marriage with Antonia, and the favour shewn him by Augustus,

Augustus, increased his jealousy and aversion; and so opposite were the sentiments of Drusus to those tyrannical notions which had even in youth taken possession of his heart, that he flattered himself he saw in them a justifiable cause of hatred. In this opinion he produced a letter which his brother had in confidence addressed to him, and in which he had made a proposal that they should unite their efforts to prevail on Augustus to restore the ancient constitution; and hoped that by this piece of treachery he would at least have made Augustus the enemy of his brother. But he was in this instance disappointed. Augustus saw through his design, and continued to the last to love and honour the character of Drusus, and despise the mean jealousy by which he knew the elder son of Livia to be inspired.

By the conduct of Augustus, and the sentiments of the public, that jealousy was every day augmented; and when Drusus expired,

expired; it descended to Germanicus, who inherited his father's popularity, and all his father's virtues.

Germanicus, by his forbearance in refusing to accede to the wishes of the armies, in whose power it was to put him in possession of imperial greatness, had only given to Tiberius an additional cause of jealousy and hatred; nor could his sullen soul endure that the man should live to whom he owed so great an obligation. In vain did he hope that the death of Germanicus would relieve him from the pangs of jealousy and malevolence. The relief which pride had prompted him to seek in cruelty, he sought in vain. The widow and children of Germanicus still remained to torture him, and seemed to his distempered mind as if they triumphed over the impotence of his vengeance. In his secret soul he had doomed them to destruction; nor did the death of Sejanus make any alteration in his purpose, for it altered not the dis-

positions, whence every cruel action of his life had flowed.

The news of what had befallen Sejanus was quickly circulated throughout the empire; nor did it fail to penetrate to the dreary solitude where the unfortunate Agrippina counted the lingering hours. The event seemed so improbable, that she could not easily be induced to give credit to the first relater; but when she heard the fact repeated by those who had themselves been witnesses of all that had been transacted, a gleam of satisfaction shot through the gloom of melancholy that had involved her soul. The fall of her enemy was to her a subject of triumph and rejoicing, but the joy which it occasioned was full of agitation, transient, and tumultuous. It raised her hopes of having the same justice done to her innocence, as had been passed on Sejanus's guilt; and with hope the desire of lengthened life returned; but the anxiety which was thus rekindled in her bosom,

bosom, was perhaps more intolerable than all she had endured while in a state of torpid despair.

In every sail that appeared on the distant ocean, Agrippina now took an interest; for in every sail she imagined the destined bark that was to convey her back to Italy, to the embraces of her children, and to the joyful congratulations of her exulting friends. In restless expectation she enquired concerning the progress of each passing vessel, and as she eagerly listened to the dashing of every distant oar, deceived herself into a belief that the sound became more near and more distinct; and that did she now possess the blessing of sight, she would behold the vessel from which it came advancing towards the island. Alas, few were those who bent their course to these inhospitable shores!

Week after week, month after month, passed away in fruitless expectation, and still no deputy from the senate, no messenger

fenger from Tiberius, arrived. It was only when any of the miserable inhabitants of the island went to dispose of their fish or other goods to the municipal towns on the opposite coast, that any news was brought to Pandataria concerning the events that were passing at Rome. Accounts thus brought were necessarily mutilated and imperfect; nor could Agirppina have given credit to the tales of horror, of which they were chiefly composed, had not the details published in the gazette confirmed all that rumour had dared to utter. In these authentic documents (which were daily dispatched from Rome to the governors of the municipalities, and the principal officers of every district*) Agrippina read the black transactions which had marked each passing day. Livilla and her guilty associates were victims sacrificed to justice: but not by the death of Livilla and her associates was Tiberius to be appeased.

* Note N.

The

The innocent perished with the guilty. The accounts reached Agrippina at far distant intervals, but every interval seemed to have been filled with blood.

Among those whom Tiberius had marked for vengeance, there were few with whom Agrippina had not been once familiar; many with whom she had lived in habits of intimacy and friendship. These were often prosecuted without the shadow of crime; and as almost every prosecution closed in death, the mockery of a trial was only adding insult to murder. The charge of violated majesty was a signal of destruction, nor was there any other way of escaping from the threatening storm than by a voluntary death, to which last sad effort of despair numbers had recourse.

Ships arrived at Pandataria loaded with illustrious exiles, some of whom were destined to proceed to other islands, while others were doomed to share with Agrippina a hopeless and melancholy confinement
in

in the same sea-girt prison. The arrival of these unhappy persons occasioned a conflict of opposite emotions in the mind of Agrippina, which, oppressed as it was by the horrors of everlasting solitude, could not but feel a gleam of comfort in the prospect of enjoying the sweets of social intercourse, though she at the same time felt for the sad occasion that afforded it. Never, from the hour that had torn her from Rome, had she seen the kindness of sympathy written upon any human countenance: never had she heard the soothing voice of consolation. Her tears and sighs moved no more pity than the hoarse murmur of the waves which beat on the adjacent rocks: nor could Agrippina expect to meet with sympathy from persons in whose sorrows she would not have sympathized.

In the separation made by rank and circumstances, the tie of a common nature, that tie which ought to bind man to man, was in the pagan world compleatly lost. Pride on
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the one hand, and selfishness on the other, did indeed form a bond of union between the different classes; but it was not in its nature such as could expand the affections of the heart, and lead them to enter into each other's feelings with any degree of sensibility. Neither their civil nor religious institutions were calculated to inspire this glow of benevolence. The rich and the poor, the noble and the lowly, knew not what it was to meet on equal terms in the house of GOD, to join in the same acts of humility and contrition, to rejoice in the same hopes of mercy, and to send their prayers and praises in unison to one common Parent, one universal LORD, one great Creator! They considered not each other as joint heirs of immortality, beings equally frail by nature, and who might be equally enriched by grace! And till men were thus taught to consider each other, it does not appear that sympathy was apt to extend beyond the narrow circle traced

out

out by the circumstance in which the individual was placed.

Of the exiles whom Tiberius sent in crowds to the different islands, we know little more than that they were of illustrious rank. The greater part were probably females; the wives and daughters of those who had been put to death by the tyrant, on pretence of their attachment to that minister whom he had so lately termed his *bosom friend*, and whom he had extolled to the skies as *the best of men!* It may be easily imagined with what interest Agrippina would listen to the accounts they gave of all the events that had taken place at Rome during the sad term of her captivity. In answer to the anxious enquiries she made concerning her own family, she was informed, that on the fatal day on which she had been carried away from Rome, her mother-in-law Antonia had taken her daughters Drusilla and Julia home to her own house, where they had remained ever
since

since. That Caligula had likewise continued to live with Antonia till the preceding summer, when Tiberius had called him to Caprea, where he now was in high favour with the emperor, and in his presence alternately witnessing the most shocking instances of cruelty, and the most disgusting scenes of vice.

Of the fate of the unfortunate Drusus Agrippina had already been informed, and already had she shed many bitter tears over the miserable destiny of her misguided son: but whether he was still confined in the dungeon beneath the palace, or whether he had escaped from thence, seemed now a doubtful point. Reports had been spread through Greece and Asia of his having appeared in both these districts, and that he had been seen by numbers of people, who recognised him as the son of Germanicus, and were determined to support him in his rights. Remembering the fate of her brother Posthumus, Agrippina did not
dare

dare to encourage any other hopes for the safety of Drusus, than what arose from the advanced years and increasing infirmities of his relentless persecutor. Never since he grew up to manhood till the present period, had Drusus been to her an object of hope or of anxiety; but now that Nero was no more, her heart, softened by misfortunes, felt towards her undutiful child no sentiments but those of compassion and tenderness. To his union with Æmilia Lepida she now most willingly attributed the faults she had most severely blamed; and all that she heard of the conduct of this odious woman, served to confirm her in this opinion. Of her criminal intimacy with Sejanus sufficient evidence had been given in the course of the late investigation; but in compliment to her father, Tiberius had thought proper to quash the proceedings against her. She now lived in her father's house, shunned and detested

by

by all the world, and believed to be given up to a life of shameless profligacy.*

Among those concerning whom Agrippina felt the liveliest interest, was her brother-in-law Asinius Gallus. The account of his fate was striking and impressive, affording an awful lesson to every great man who launches on the troubled sea of politics. By an unfortunate solicitude to strengthen his interest in the senate, Asinius was led to form a political friendship with Sejanus; who, conscious of the support he would derive from uniting himself with a man of such high reputation, courted his favour with the utmost attention and assiduity.

It was impossible that Asinius could have any real esteem for Sejanus; but in the maxims of misguided policy a man's worth is measured by the degree of power he possesses; and unfortunately for Asinius, these maxims prevailed over the sentiments

* Note O.

of

of truth and honour. Imagining the power of the minister to be compleatly established by his nomination to the consulate, he soon after took an opportunity of displaying his zeal by a speech in the senate, in which he proposed to grant to the worthy friend of the emperor some new honours. The vote passed, and Asinius was deputed by the fathers to carry an account of it to Tiberius, and to request his concurrence in a measure, which they believed would meet his wishes. Little did Asinius think that the fate of Sejanus was at this time determined, and that he was doomed to pave the way for the fall of that minister to whom, from selfish motives, he was thus doing homage: little could he think so from the reception of Tiberius, which had all the appearance of being kind and cordial. Asinius knew not that twenty years had not been sufficient to efface from the mind of the tyrant the unreasonable hatred he had conceived against him, when
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he first beheld him as the husband of her, whom, in order to gratify his ambition, he had been prevailed on to divorce. By special invitation from the emperor he prolonged his stay at Caprea for several days, during which time he was a constant guest at the imperial table.

We may judge of the surprise of Asinius, when in the midst of this scene of festivity, he was arrested by a prætor, sent expressly from the senate to take him into custody on some unknown charge. He would in the first impulse of passion have destroyed himself, had not Tiberius, dreading that he should lose the gratification of a full revenge, dissuaded him from this purpose by the assurances of his friendship and protection. Depending on these promises, Asinius permitted himself to be disarmed. He was conveyed to Rome under a strong guard, but there he found that the friendship of Tiberius had provided him with chains and a dungeon, where he

was

was doomed to linger out his days in long protracted wretchedness.

No one knew for what offence he thus suffered; no friend had access to his presence. A nobleman of distinguished talents, who had shared his confidence, was, without the pretence of any other crime than friendship for him, put to instant death. Others were banished, for having been guilty of a like offence; yet till after the death of Sejanus, Tiberius was comparatively merciful! from that æra he set no bounds to cruelty. The prisons were filled by persons of illustrious rank of either sex, and of every age; whole families perished at once by the hands of the executioners, and the dead bodies thrown into the streets were so numerous as to infect the air. Where no political offence could be alleged, the feelings of humanity were imputed as a crime; and while the streets of Rome streamed with blood, an aged mother was put to death for weeping over the corpse of her murdered son.

Agrippina could not be surpris'd at the pusillanimity betrayed by her friends in the senate in basely deserting her interests, since she now saw that they had not spirit to support their own. Instead of acting with the magnanimity which more generous sentiments would have inspired, each individual, only intent on saving himself, threw his weight into the scale of tyranny and injustice; and vainly hoped that by becoming an accomplice in the destruction of others, he should escape a similar fate: nor when convinced of his error, did any take courage from despair. There were few who dared, even in the certain approach of death, to speak their sentiments with manly freedom; or if any were thus bold, it was when they were within view of that shelter which they had secured to themselves by the means of suicide. To this dastardly conduct they gave the name of courage; but had they possessed that noble intrepidity which is founded on the

firmness

firmness of principle, they would not thus have shrunk from the performance of their duties. They would not, at the suggestion of wounded pride have basely deserted the post assigned them by Providence, and with unfeeling selfishness left their friends and relations to brave the storm. Such was the number of those who perished by their own hands during the period of Agrippina's imprisonment, that had they united their efforts in the cause of justice and humanity, Tiberius must have yielded to their influence, and been forced to stay the torrent of despotic vengeance.

Rome, as described by the unfortunate exiles, presented the most gloomy picture of horror and despair; nor was the imagination relieved by turning to Caprea, where every blooming grove was polluted by the abominations of lasciviousness, and every wave that beat against the shore was loaded with the putrid limbs of some murdered victim.

Of

Another dismal year rolled on, without producing any real change in the melancholy situation of Agrippina. From the interest of Caligula, however much he now appeared to be in favour with the emperor, his unfortunate mother had no reason to expect a mitigation of her afflictions; neither could she derive much food for hope in the promotion of her son-in-law to the consular dignity; yet it is probable that both these circumstances contributed for a time to prevent her sinking in despair.

The consulate of Domitius passed, and no effort had been made to release her from the horrors of her dreary prison. Every prospect of relief was now removed; and the embers of hope were gradually extinguished in her breast. She thought herself the most miserable and forlorn of human beings. But wretched as her situation was, not all the sorrows under which

she groaned could inflict such agony as that which preyed upon the tyrant's heart.

“Neither the imperial dignity,” says the historian, “nor the gloom of solitude, nor the rocks of Caprea, could shield him from himself. He lived on the rack of guilt, and his wounded spirit groaned in agony.” In a letter to the senate, Tiberius depicts his own misery in still stronger colours: “What to write, conscript fathers, in what terms to express myself, or what to refrain from writing, is a matter of such perplexity, that if I know how to decide, may the just gods and the goddesses of vengeance doom me to die in pangs worse than those under which I linger every day!!” In this state of mind he ordered all the prisoners who had been confined on suspicion of attachment to Sejanus, to be massacred at once: but still his insatiate cruelty called for new victims. A sense of his own increasing infirmities made him dread that those whom he had
most

most unjustly persecuted might survive him, and this idea determined him to secure his vengeance by sending them before him to the grave.

Asinius Gallus was the first whom after this resolution he permitted to close his sufferings in death. Drusus was the next victim. The gloom of a dungeon, and the cruel insolence of the brutal keepers, who had it in command to treat him with every species of indignity, had not conquered the spirit of this unhappy prince. He was by the order of Tiberius to be starved to death. By chewing the weeds which served for his bed, he protracted the period of his own sufferings; but not even by this affecting proof of their intensity, did he wring a feeling of pity and remorse from the obdurate heart of the tyrant. Nine days he lingered in the agonies of famine, and at length expired, breathing solemn imprecations on the author of his misery, and “praying the gods to reserve him for the object of their own peculiar vengeance!”

Agrippina had not the anguish of hearing of the tragic end of her unhappy son. Worn out with sufferings, the sickness of hope deferred at length sunk into her heart, wasted the springs of life, and brought her by slow degrees to the borders of the grave. She was in this situation, when an order arrived from Tiberius to withhold from her all nourishment. She smiled at an instance of malice that was now abortive: and willingly resigned herself to the arms of death.*

Agrippina was in the forty-sixth year of her age when she expired. Fourteen years had elapsed since the death of Germanicus, years full of anxiety and sorrow; yet was her constitution such, as, but for the cruelties inflicted in the latter period of her life, to promise length of days. At the commencement of her captivity, time had not diminished the graces of her

* On the 15th of November, A. D. 33—year of Rome 786.

person; nor had grief, though it chased the roses from her cheek, altered the fine expression of her lovely countenance. By the savage blow of the centurion, the symmetry of her features was irreparably injured; but though Tiberius had thus in malice destroyed that beauty which had long been the object of universal admiration, he had it not in his power to injure what was dearer to her than beauty—her spotless fame. In vain did he endeavour after her decease to load her memory with imputations to which every action of her life bore the clearest contradiction: even in that corrupt age there was a sufficient degree of virtue left, to spurn at so foul a calumny. Tiberius, foiled in his attempts at defamation, was obliged to desist; and to his great mortification, found that tho' he could inflict torture and death, he could not murder reputation.

The reputation of Agrippina, in the points in which Tiberius maliciously endeavoured

deavoured to attack it, was indeed invulnerable. But though neither pride nor ambition were considered by Agrippina and her contemporaries as passions incompatible with the purest virtue; those who have paid any attention to their consequences, as they have been displayed in the preceding pages, will perceive, that in cherishing pride and ambition, Agrippina cherished the seeds of misery and corruption. She acted up to her ideas of virtue, but her ideas of virtue were imperfect. Let those who have an opportunity of forming theirs upon a purer model, learn to prize the inestimable privilege they enjoy, in having clearer views of moral excellence, and brighter prospects of future reward, than ever opened on the unfortunate Agrippina!

ADDITIONAL

NOTES.

(A.) p. 9.

IT has already been observed, that the ministers of religion among the Romans did not form a distinct order from the other citizens, and that they were usually chosen from the most honourable and distinguished families. The pontifical college was the first in dignity. The pontifices judged in all causes relating to sacred things, and in cases where there was no written law, they prescribed what regulations they thought proper, and had it in their power to fine such as neglected their mandates, according to the magnitude of the offence. The chief of the pontifices was called *Pontifex Maximus*. He was supreme judge and arbiter in all religious matters. His presence was requisite

sitate in all public and solemn acts of religion; on which account he was not permitted to absent himself from Rome.

(B.) p. 30.

There were three famous epicures of the name of Apicius. Of the person here meant, Seneca says, that “ in Rome, in that city from which the teachers of philosophy were banished, this man, professing the science of the kitchen, corrupted the manners of the age by his skill in cookery. Finding himself, after a long course of profusion and gluttony, much involved in debt, and, after satisfying all demands, not worth more than 100,000*l.* he finished his days by a dose of poison.

The cookery of Apicius, however it might agree with the Roman stomach, has been found rather unsafe by some in later times. It is said that Madame Dacier and her husband had nearly fallen sacrifices to their desire of tasting a classical ragout, prepared after one of the receipts of Apicius; nor is this to be wondered at, since the Roman epicures seem to have had little notion of delicacy in the choice of their ingredients.

(c.) p. 45.

(c.) p. 45.

We are informed by Tacitus, that the images of twenty illustrious families graced the funeral procession: "Those of Brutus and Cassius," says he, "were not displayed, but for that reason they were present to every imagination, and with superior lustre eclipsed the splendour of the day."

(D.) p. 115.

Cordus resolved to die by abstinence. He endured the agonies of famine for three days, before death came to his relief. He was in his sufferings consoled by the tender attention of his daughter Marcia, whose filial piety was praised by Seneca in terms of the highest eulogium. He tells her, "that by saving his writings, she gave new life to his books, and that the memory of her father will live as long as the Romans shall wish to review the history of their own affairs; as long as posterity shall desire to know the man whose genius was unfettered, whose spirit was unconquered and whose hand was ready to deliver himself from his enemies." It is impossible not to regret,
that

that a work so highly spoken of by the best judges of literary merit should have been lost.

(E.) p. 128.

The memoirs of the younger Agrippina, from which Tacitus extracted the above anecdote, were written by herself, and are frequently referred to as a work of merit by succeeding writers.

(F.) p. 141.

The passage quoted by Agrippina is to be found in the first book of the Iliad, and forms part of the speech made by Achilles to the heralds Thalthybius and Eurybates, when they came, in obedience to Agamemnon, to carry Briseis to his tent. The heralds, conscious of the tyranny of their master, and of the iniquity of the orders they were about to execute, are represented by the poet as standing abashed and unwilling to proceed. Achilles, perceiving their confusion, generously encourages them with the assurance, that as he knew they acted under the command of another, they should not on that account incur his displeasure.

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The passage is thus translated by Mr. Pope.

“ Th’ unwilling heralds act their lord’s commands;
 “ Pensive they walk along the barren sands:
 “ Arriv’d, the hero in his tent they find,
 “ With gloomy aspect, on his arm reclin’d.
 “ At awful distance long they silent stand,
 “ Loth to advance, or speak their hard command;
 “ Decent confusion! This the godlike man
 “ Perceiv’d, and thus with accent mild began :
 “ With leave and honour enter our abodes,
 “ Ye sacred ministers of men and gods!
 “ I know your message; by constraint you came;
 “ *Not you but your imperious lord I blame.*”

(G.) p. 183.

The Gemoniæ was the place whence the bodies of malefactors were thrown into the Tiber. They were usually dragged by a hook to the brink of the precipice.

The veneration for the family statues has already been observed; to break or destroy them, was the greatest possible insult.

(H.) p. 185.

The anecdote relative to the dog of Sabinus is given from Pliny.

(I.) p. 190.

(i.) p. 190.

The Domitii were deemed particularly proud of their high birth, though it was long since the family had produced any person of distinguished merit. The grandfather of this young man had been concerned in the death of Julius Cæsar, but had afterwards the art to recommend himself to Augustus, who gave his niece (the sister of Antonia) in marriage to his son: Cneius Domitius was of course first cousin to Germanicus. He was so utterly depraved, as to speak of his own profligacy without shame. On being congratulated on the birth of Nero, he declared, “that from him and Agrippina nothing but what was pernicious and detestable could proceed.”

(κ.) p. 195.

“The senate (soon after the accession of Tiberius) began to offer the incense of adulation to Livia. It was proposed to confer upon her the title of parent; that name was thought too general, the more distinctive appellation of mother of her country was moved as an amendment. It was further proposed, with
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the general concurrence, that to the name of the emperor should be added the son of Julia. Tiberius opposed these several motions; honours, he said, *ought not to be lavished on women*; in what regarded his own rank, he was determined to act with the strictest self-denial. This had the appearance of moderation, but envy was the source. By the honours intended to his mother, he thought his own glory might be eclipsed, and, in that spirit, prevented a decree, by which a licitor was ordered to attend her; nor would he suffer an altar to be raised on account of her adoption into the Julian family.”—Tacitus. Ann. book i. sect. 14.

(L.) p. 280.

The comment upon this passage, given in one of the discourses of the truly venerable and enlightened Doctor Maclaine, is too deserving of consideration to be introduced with an apology for inserting it.

“It would seem,” he observes, “as if an overpowering blaze of evidence had shone upon the understanding, and touched the heart of
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the ingenuous centurion at this time, and that a peculiar influence of the spirit of **GOD** rendered the whole of this scene affecting and salutary to him. We may imagine, without going beyond the line of possibility, that emerging at this moment from the darkness of paganism, he received from the sublime combination of circumstances which ennobled the cross, new ideas of deity and providence, of human guilt and celestial mercy, and new prospects, or (call them, if you please) rays of hope, with respect to futurity. All this is at least possible. But reduce the signification of the centurion's testimony as low as you please, it will still mean that the mission and person of **CHRIST** were objects above the sphere of humanity: however imperfect the conceptions of this man may have been, whether he considered **JESUS** as a demi-god, or had less confused notions of his person and mission, yet still he perceives his grandeur, even in his expiring moments, bears testimony to his innocence as a *righteous* man, and acknowledges his origin to have been truly *divine*."—Dr. Mac-laine's Sermons, p. 97.

(M.) p. 308.

"Lur'd by the splendour of his happier hour,
 "Would'st thou possess Sejanus' wealth and pow'r;
 "See crowds of suppliants at thy levee wait,
 "Give this to sway the army, that the state;
 "And keep a prince in ward, who sits the while,
 "With his Chaldean flock, in Caprea's isle?
 "Yes, yes, thou would'st (thy secret thoughts I see,
 "Have cohorts, legions, armies, just as he;
 "'Tis nature this; e'en they who want the will,
 "Pant for the dreadful privilege to kill."

Gifford's Trans. Juv.

(N.) p. 324.

There were two different sorts of newspapers published at Rome. The first contained an account of the acts of the senate, and the other of all the lesser events of the day. Some of these gazettes are still extant, and may be considered as the model of our modern morning chronicles.

(O.) p. 330.

"Æmilia Lepida remained," says Tacitus,
 "during the life of Lepidus her father in perfect security, but detested by the public. Her
 protector

protector being now no more, (A. D. 36.) the informers seized their opportunity, and accused her of adultery with a slave. Of her guilt no doubt was entertained. She made no defence, but executed justice on herself."—Ann. b. vi.

FINIS.

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